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THE LITTLE BAREFOOT.

A TALE BY

BERTHOLD AUERBACH.

Translated from the German by

ELIZA BUCKMINSTER LEE.

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Although intended for children and youth, it will deeply interest older heads, filled as it is with the glow of feeling, and sparkling as a dewdrop.

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WHICH WAY WILL HE COME? Page 65.

JOSEPH IN THE SNOW.

A TALE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF BERTHOLD AUERBACH.

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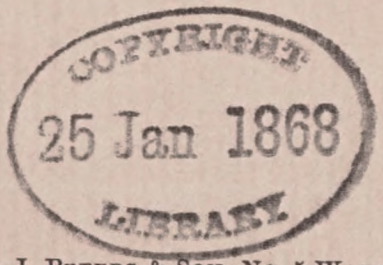

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"Here lies a child who in the woods was lost.
Not we, but the Good Shepherd, found him there,
And carried him, the while we sleeping lay,
To the Eternal Father's mansion fair."

These lines are written on a little cross in a village churchyard. It became almost necessary to repeat the sad inscription; but a happy chance saved Joseph. His wandering gained for him the name of "JOSEPH IN THE SNOW," and led him from great misery to great happiness.

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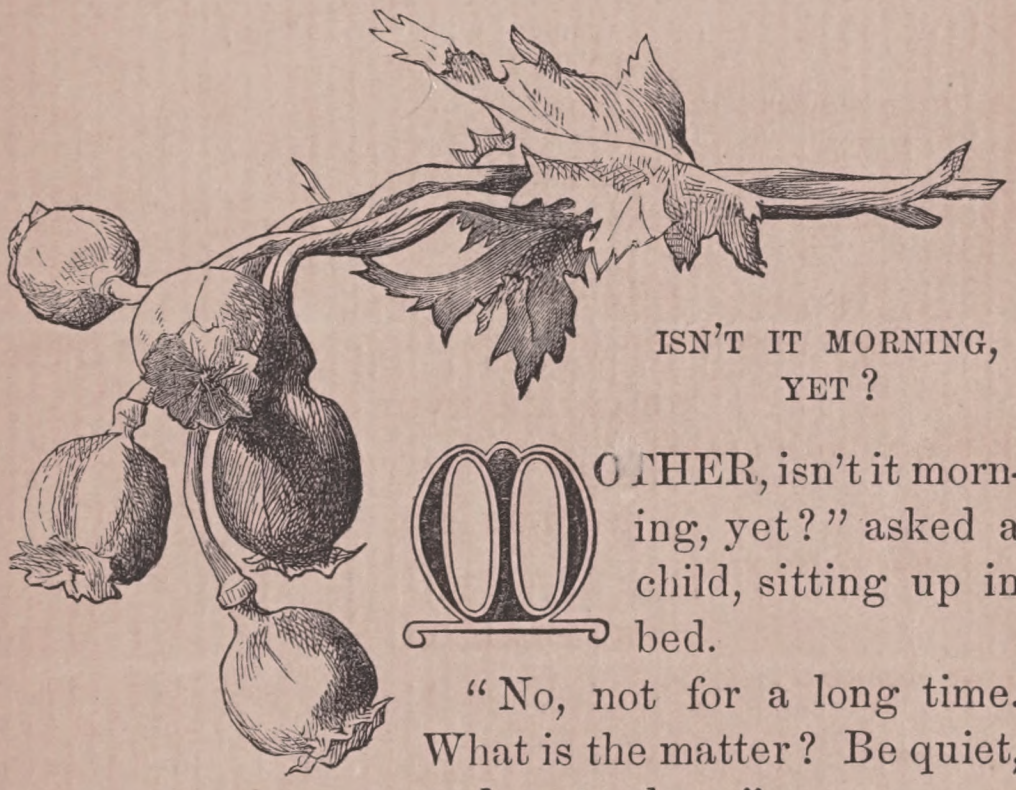
JOSEPH IN THE SNOW.

CHAPTER I.



ISN'T IT MORNING, YET?

"MOTHER, isn't it morning, yet?" asked a child, sitting up in bed.

"No, not for a long time. What is the matter? Be quiet, and go to sleep."

The child was quiet for a short time; then he asked again, in a low voice, —

"Mother, isn't it morning, yet?"

"Why do you ask, Joseph? Be still! let me sleep, and go to sleep yourself. Say your prayers again, and then sleep will come to you."

The mother once more repeated the child's evening-prayer to him, and prayed softly herself; then she said, "Now, good-night!"

The child was still for a long time; but, when his mother moved in bed, he called, half-aloud, "Mother!"

No answer.

"Mother, mother, mother!"

"What ails you? what is the matter?"

"Mother, isn't it morning, yet?"

"You are a naughty child, very naughty. Can't you let me have my night's rest? I have been three times to the woods, to-day, and am very tired. Now, if you wake me again, to-morrow evening the Christ-child will bring you nothing but a switch. Be a good boy, and go to sleep. Hark! the watchman is calling twelve."

The child drew a deep sigh, said, "Good-night, till morning!" and quite buried himself in the pillows.

It was a little, dark room, just under the roof, where these words had been spoken. The glass in the small window was so thickly covered with frost that the clear moonlight could not shine through it. The woman bent over the child, who was at last sleeping quietly; but she could no longer sleep herself; and, after lying some time with her eyes closed, she murmured, "And if he takes me home; and I believe, in spite of every thing, that he will

— he cannot help it — he must — And, if he takes me home, he will do all he can for me and our child. Alas! the days that are gone will never come back. Oh, if we could only begin our lives again! if we could wake some day, and find it was not true, that we so — But no: if we have once sinned, we must suffer for it our whole life long. Is it true that I was once as merry as people say? Why did my child ask three times, 'Isn't it morning, yet?' What will the morning bring? O Adam, Adam! you do not know what I suffer! If you did, you could not sleep now."

The brook which flowed behind the house was frozen over; but at night the gurgling of the water under its cover of ice could be heard.

The thoughts of the sleepless woman followed the course of the brook far up the stream, through pathless valleys and deep ravines, till it was stopped at the forest-mill; and as it there leaped and foamed, and whirled over the wheel, so her thoughts leaped and whirled in the night. There, in the mill, she dwelt, whom Adam's parents had chosen. Toni, the miller's daughter, had always been called a good, kind-hearted girl; and now she showed herself so cruel! The woman's hands were clinched: she felt a knife, as it were, pierce her heart; and she hissed between her teeth, "If he is untrue! No: he cannot be! But, if he is, I will not suffer it. I will go to the church with

my Joseph — no — not that — I will not take him. I will go alone — I will cry, 'I will not suffer it!' and then I will see if any priest will marry them."

The brook now flowed quietly through a meadow: here and there, at its very edge, stood a tree with thick foliage; but on both sides, extending to the mountains, were dense, high-grown fir-woods. Over rocks the brook again leaped into a solitary ravine, and flowed rapidly once more. Now it passed a mile-stone. "Here we are at home," Adam had once said there; and yet it was a full hour's walk to Röttmann Farm. There was the Otterswanger Forest; and here was a quiet spot by the brook — the watcher pressed her cold hands to her heated cheeks — where, by the large beech-tree, Adam had first kissed her. Nobody in the world thought, and she herself could hardly believe, that he could be so kind and good, so gentle and so thoughtful.

It was a beautiful summer-day: the day before, there had been a violent storm, with thunder and lightning, — so violent, that no one thought there would be a tree left standing in the forest. It is often thus, both within doors and without: there is such a tumult and confusion that we anticipate a destruction of every thing; and yet, when quiet returns, nothing is changed.

It was a beautiful summer-day. In every fur-

row and crevice, streamlets were flowing, making a loud noise, and hurrying on as though they knew their life was short, and they must make the most of it. The birds were singing, and the girl washing at the brook. What could she do but sing? Why should she not? She was still young, and without care; and she knew many songs which she had learned from her father, who in former days was so happy, and so rich in songs.

Men were coming down the brook, for there was now water enough for boats. And, look! there was Adam, the son of the house, upon a single log, which turned constantly: but he was skilful, and stood firm and upright; and, when near the girl, he let the log float as it would, placed his oar in the water, raised himself by it, and sprang with a bold leap to the shore. The girl laughed when she saw the tall young man with the high boots leaping through the air; but she was frightened when he stood before her.

"I have long wanted to say, 'Thank you!'" said he.

"Why? for what?"

"Because you have borne so much from my mother."

"I am only a servant. I receive my wages, and I must bear something. Your mother suffers enough, too: she is angry with the Lord, because your brother was killed at the wood-cutting; she

is angry with God and the world, and suffers herself most for it."

Adam opened his eyes wide in wonder. "You are — you were" — stammered he: "yes, you!" He shuddered, held his boat-hook high in the air, and suddenly cried, "Will you go from here, far from here?"

He sprang into the brook, dashing the water far above his head, and sending into the stream, with great force, the rafts, which were lying one upon another, in a bend of the brook. Martina watched him in surprise, and wondered what had happened to him. After he was out of sight, she heard him call with the raftsman, for a time; then all was still again.

For weeks, Adam did not speak to Martina: he hardly looked at her. But in the harvest-time, when the cattle were pastured in the meadow, Martina was one day going down the mountain to draw water, — there was no well at the Röttmann Farm, and it was necessary to go half-way down the mountain for water, — when she saw the bull suddenly toss his head, and begin to run. It was beautiful to see this clumsy animal run so lightly; and she watched him with delight, till the herdsman called, "Run, Martina, or the bull will gore you!"

She uttered a shrill cry, and was running away, with her face turned back, when she fell. For an

instant she heard the snorting of the beast near her; then he was bellowing loudly on the ground. Adam had hastened thither, seized the animal by the horns, and pressed his head down, and had kept him in this position till the other men had come.

Martina was saved; and Adam only said, "Another time, when you go to the meadow, take your red handkerchief off your head." He was bespattered with blood; and Martina asked, in terror, "For heaven's sake, are you hurt?"

"Don't be frightened! It's nothing at all. The bull only bled at the mouth, and threw the blood upon me. Now go for your water." He turned, and went to the pond to wash himself; and, when left alone, Martina first realized her fright, and the great danger in which she had been. Her tears began to flow, and with them sprang up in her heart admiration and love for the strong, kind man who had saved her.

At noon she heard his mother say to him, "You are the most foolish, good-for-nothing fellow in the world to put your life in danger to save a stupid girl!"

"I won't do it again," Adam answered.

"Believe me," said his father, smiling, "you couldn't do it a second time, — catch a bull by the horns, and escape with your life. It's a pity no-

body was there to see it; for it is a deed the whole country would praise."

After this, whenever Adam met Martina, he greeted her in a friendly way, but said nothing more to her. He appeared pleased, however, that she had helped him to do a real Röttmann deed.

Again Martina was washing at the brook, when Adam stood before her.

"Are you well?" he asked.

"I haven't got over my fright yet," she said: "I tremble now, when I think of it. But I shall be grateful to you for my life as long as I" —

"I will hear nothing of that. The bull isn't really bad: no animal would be, neither horse nor bull, if men didn't make them so, when young, by foolishly frightening and goading them. But now, — yes — well — I — Don't you know all? and don't you hold me as dear as I you?"

He could not say much; but in his eyes there was a look of deep tenderness as he watched Martina, and laid his hand on her shoulder. And here he gave her the first kiss; and no one could believe that this Adam would be so gentle and so tender. But, when he put his arm around her neck, she cried out with pain: then he laughed, and begged her to teach him how to do it gently. "Stand upon that stump of a tree, — so!"

And, when she showed him, he lifted her like a little child; and yet she was large and strong.

They stood together under the beech-tree; and Martina looked up at the leaves, between which the slanting sunbeams were falling.

"See, how beautiful the tree is!" she exclaimed.

"It's good for nothing," said Adam. "It has many branches, but scarcely any trunk."

"I do not think so. Only see how golden-green it glitters and shines!"

"You are right. It is beautiful," he answered; and his rough, brown face was very mild as a few trembling sunbeams played upon it. For the first time, he seemed to understand that there was any thing to be seen in a tree, except its amount of wood. And, as often as Martina thought of that look through the beech-tree, it seemed to her that those sunbeams were shining forever, and could never fade away.

Taking Martina's hand, Adam said, "This tree I will always leave standing. It shall never be cut down. Tree, come to our wedding! Or, no: stay here, and you shall hear joyful music on the wedding-day. Martina, can't you give me something of yours to keep?"

"I am poor, and have nothing."

"Haven't you any thing? I see something I would like. May I have it?"

"Yes, whatever it is."

"See! there is your name upon your breast. Tear it out, and give it to me."

"I would tear my heart from my body if you asked me." She tore from her kerchief the part where her name was, and gave it to him.

"I give you nothing," he said; "but, look around! As far as you can see, all is yours!"

At these words, which showed how rich Adam was, and how poor Martina, a feeling of sadness came over her; but it quickly fled as he again took her hand.

It was a wild, all-powerful, all-forgetting love that had come to them, and sorrow and misery soon followed. Adam was sent, for the first time in his life, down the Rhine, with a boat, to Holland; and, during his absence, she was driven in shame and disgrace from the house.

These were the pictures of the past, both blissful and sorrowful, which spread themselves before Martina, in her little attic-chamber.

She buried her face in the pillow. The cocks were crowing in the village, for it was already long past midnight. "The one that is crowing now must be Häspele's: he has bought a new kind. How loud those long-legged ones crow! I like the others better. How good Häspele is! and how kind to Joseph! He certainly meant it, when he said, 'Martina, in my eyes you are a widow, and a brave one, too.' Alas! I pity you, Häspele; but I cannot — no, no gratitude" —

Without finding peace, Martina waited for the day. It often seemed as if sleep pitied her, and were coming to her: but, after lying quietly a few moments, she would start suddenly, for she seemed to hear the voice, and to see the hard, threatening face, of her old mistress; and then she would murmur, "Isn't it morning, yet?"

CHAPTER II.

A DUET IS INTERRUPTED.

AT the same time that the child was awake and so restless in the little attic-room, two lights were burning in the parlor of the priest's house, and three persons were sitting at a round table, and chatting pleasantly: they were the priest, his wife, and her brother, a young farmer. It was very cheerful and warm in the room; and, in the pauses of the conversation, you could hear the sound of apples baking, and the simmering of a kettle on the stove. The priest, who did not usually smoke, was thoughtful enough to do so when a guest came, and also to pass his snuff-box, from which he often took a pinch himself, and as often handed it to his brother-in-law, who repeatedly thanked him. The priest regarded his guest with evident pleasure; and his wife every now and then looked up with beaming eyes from

her embroidery (it was a present for the coming Christmas) into her brother's face.

"You have done well," continued the priest; and his handsome, oval face, with the finely-cut mouth, the dark-blue eyes, and the high, arched forehead, wore an expression of even greater kindness than usual. "You have done well to come and spend your holiday with us; but," he added, looking at the fowling-piece in the corner, and smiling, "your gun will do you little good, if you do not have the fortune to meet the wolf, which, they say, is prowling about the neighborhood."

"I have come not merely for a visit and hunting," replied the young man in a deep, manly voice: "I have come also to beg you, dear brother, to withdraw your application for the place in Odenwald, and to wait till one is vacant in the vicinity of the capital, or perhaps in the capital itself. Our uncle, who is now president of the consistory, has promised to give you the first one that is empty."

"It isn't possible for me to go there," the priest answered. "To be sure, I would like, for Lina's sake as well as my own, to be near our parents, and sometimes I really long to hear good music; but I do not like the new doctrines that are preached, and the oversight to which a priest is subjected. There is, moreover, among my brethren of the present day, a great solicitude for their parish-

ioners' souls: they give each other prescriptions which sound very fine, but which, in reality, have too much pride in them. It is with them, as with parents who talk very wisely about bringing up children, — I always find that those who talk the most about it have the least care and control. And really, if we are simple and true, we can teach both our own children, and those of our church, without any art, and without constant worry and anxiety. I am especially opposed to change. I think we ought to grow old with the men for whom we have worked in the heat of the day; and, in a well-governed state, we should be advanced to a higher position, while remaining in the same place. The reason that I applied for the situation at Odenwald is, that I feel myself becoming too old to bear the fatigue here; and, besides, there are certain wrongs which I am unable to help — but enough of this. Come, let us sing."

He arose, went to the piano, and began to play his favorite air; and his wife and the young farmer sang, with well-trained voices, the duet from "Titus:" —

"Nor good nor ill divide us."

It seemed like a joyful embrace, a clasping of true hands, as the two voices harmonized in this soul-stirring melody.

During the singing, there had been a sound like

the cracking of a whip before the house. They had heard it, but had paid no attention to it; but now, when the song was finished, there was a quick, loud snap, which caused the wife to hasten to the window, and, opening it, to ask in the darkness if any one was there.

"Yes," answered a loud voice.

She quickly shut the window; for an icy wind was blowing against her face, which was glowing from the effect of the song. Her brother was going to see who it was; but the careful woman held him back, for he too was heated. She sent the servant-girl down, and in the mean time lamented that perhaps her husband would have to go out this dark night. The girl came back, and said it was some one whom Röttmann's wife had sent to bring the priest to her.

"Is it Adam, or a boy?" asked the priest.

"A boy."

"Let him come up, and take something warm, while I am getting ready."

The priest's wife begged her husband not to put his life in danger to go to the wicked woman. "The way to Röttmann's house," she said, "is dangerous enough in the daytime: at this season, and in the night, it is dreadful."

"A physician must go to a sick man, without asking about the wind and weather; and how much more must I!" answered her husband.

The boy now came into the room. The priest gave him a glass of something to drink, and asked him, —

"Is your mistress very sick?"

"Oh, not so very sick! She can scold and swear enough still," answered the boy.

And now the priest's wife again entreated him not to go till morning: she would answer before God, if the wicked woman should die without spiritual help. At the same time, she seemed to know that her entreaties would avail nothing; for, while she was talking so earnestly to dissuade her husband, she was also pouring some brandy into a little straw-flask, which she afterwards put into the pocket of a large sheep-skin coat.

The young farmer wanted to go with his brother-in-law; but the latter would not permit him. "You must stay here, and go to bed soon," said the priest, at the door. "Do not come out: you are hoarse, and I want many more songs, before you go home. The beautiful Mozart melody will accompany me on my way."

The brother and sister did go out of the house, however, to the place where the horses stood; and the sister wrapped around the feet of the priest a large woollen shawl, and asked the boy, "Why have you brought a sleigh, instead of a wagon?"

"There is so much snow on the mountain!" replied the boy.

"Ah, yes! I suppose so. I wonder you do not all break your necks on that frozen ground. Drive very slowly and carefully. And, Otho, I would walk up the Otterswanger; or, no — remain on the sled, for you will freeze if you get out; but be very careful, and Heaven keep you!"

"Good-night," cried the priest; and his voice sounded strangely, out of his wrappings. The horses started, the sleigh went rumbling and thumping out of the village, and the brother and sister returned to the house.

"I cannot tell you how much good it does me to see your husband, and to hear him speak," said the young man, when they were once again in the warm room. "It seems to me that the older he grows, the clearer his pure, beautiful nature shows itself. Or is the change in me? and do I see more clearly than before?"

His sister smiled, and said, "No: you certainly love Otho with your whole heart; but you do not begin to know how true and holy and good he is. Some people think he does not preach enough; but he is a sermon in himself. His gentleness, his untiring zeal and love, make all who know him kind and good. They become so merely by looking at him; and, when he does preach, every word is a fruitful seed. Even the roughest men are respectful and gentlemanly in his presence. I used to think it a great pity that a man who rose so far

above other men should pass his life among rude peasants; but I have learned that the highest nature, which is simple and sweet as the Bible, is needed here."

I do not know which was the greater, the earnestness with which the sister spoke, or that with which the brother listened; even as we cannot tell which gives us greater pleasure, the sight of happiness in another, or the possession of it. There is, however, one joy that belongs to all who are capable of feeling it, — the recognition of a noble heart, and love for it.

"I know where he is now!" continued the wife, starting up as though she saw him before her. "He is by the great horn-beam; and now they are going by the pine-grove, where the wind always blows so fiercely. Wrap yourself up warm! Ah! I believe you will convert the wicked woman! Yes, I believe it! You can do every thing! And you will marry Adam and Martina, and then we will remain here!"

The brother did not know what to say to the excited woman; but finally he asked, "Who is this wicked woman? and Adam? and Martina?"

"Come, and sit here by me, and I will tell you; for, unless I do something, I can find no peace till I know Otho is safe in the house."

CHAPTER III.

THE WILD RÖTTMANNS.

"THERE is a family of strong men, real giants, who live above us on the mountain; and many wonderful stories are told of these rough people."

"Tell me about them."

"They are large, uncouth men; and they take great pride that so many deeds of strength are told of them and their ancestors; and, as they are rich, they can still afford to do the same. The father of the present farmer is said to have had such a powerful voice, that once, when he called to a gamekeeper, the latter fell backward upon the ground. His chief pleasure lay in going to the public-house, and, when he had eaten, rolling the tin-plates into balls. The present farmer, when he was young, had his greatest delight in dancing; and, when he danced, he used to put a dozen or more heavy iron wedges with which wood is split

— they call them in the country *speidel* — in the pockets of his long coat, so that every one must stand aside for him, and he could have room enough. He has often danced twenty-four hours at a time, pausing only to drink, which he did, and still does, to an incredible extent. In order to know how much he had drunk at these times, he would twist a button off his red waistcoat for each pint, and in the end redeem them from the landlord.

"The old man with the loud voice once forbade him to stay, during the day, at a wedding in Wengern, as there was a meadow in the Otterswanger Valley which he must mow. A strict obedience has always been preserved in the family; so this submissive son did as he was bidden, but danced the entire night as if mad. In the morning, his father came to the meadow, and heard music. What could it mean? Some one was mowing, but how strangely he looked! The father came nearer, and found his son doing as he had commanded; but, on Speidel-Röttmann's back was a pack, in which was a fiddler playing. And so the son mowed the meadow up and down, till the work was done; then he danced away to the wedding, with the fiddler on his back.

"We used to have a proverb, 'Every thing can be stolen, except a mill-stone and red-hot iron.' But Speidel-Röttmann once played a trick upon the miller by rolling the mill-stone half-way up the mountain.

"He had two sons, Vincent and Adam. The older, Vincent, was not so strong as his brother, but as sly as a lynx. That was inherited from his mother; for the Röttmanns are not at all malicious, but only unmannered and wild. They say that Vincent, who superintended the wood-cutters, was very cruel, and treated them like slaves. One day, as they were cutting a tree, it fell upon him, and killed him. It is thought, and the former priest firmly believed, that the wood-cutters did it intentionally. Since that time, Röttmann's wife, who was never very amiable, has been a perfect dragon, that would poison the whole world if she could. She is the only person who does not love my husband; but she hates him, because he will not conform to her wishes, and ask every dying man to whom he is summoned if he has nothing to confess about the death of her son. Her husband wished that the tree which had struck his son, and which was one of the finest of the so-called 'Dutchman's trees,' should be sent down the Rhine. He said, 'A tree's a tree, and gold is gold. Why should this remain useless because it killed Vincent?' But she thought otherwise. After it had lain a long time untouched, she commanded the wood-cutters to cut off the branches; and, while they were at work, she watched them, and came unexpectedly among them, hoping to overhear something about her son's death; but she found out

nothing in this way. She had a large pile made of the branches, and on it she burned the dead man's clothes. 'So shall they burn in hell,' she cried, 'who have murdered my Vincent.' Six horses and ten oxen were brought to drag the trunk to the farm-house; but they had gone but a short distance, when it was found that so large a tree could not be carried up the mountain; so it was sawed twice, and now the logs lie in the farm-yard, before the door of the house. She says the tree is waiting to be made into a gallows and a funeral-pile, to hang and to burn her son's murderers. She often sits at the window, and talks earnestly to them; and she laughs heartily whenever a stranger stumbles over them. She has erected a shrine to her son (such as the Catholics build) on the footpath that leads from the valley to the forest-mill, near the place where Vincent was struck.

"Her other son, Adam, she treats worse than a step-son. It is said that she beats him still, like a little child; and he submits to it, although he has shown himself already stronger than any other Röttmann, and has won a proud surname; for he is known all about here as 'The Horse.' He once carried a horse to be shod, and found the smith bargaining for one that was harnessed to a large two-wheeled cart, loaded with pease. The peasant who owned the horse was saying, 'There isn't

another such horse in the world! He can draw more than three other horses.'

"'Ho, ho!' cried Adam Röttmann, who had just come; and he called so loud, that the peasant tumbled over against his horse.

"'Ho, ho! I bet I can carry that load, and the wagon too, as far as "The Crown," in three loads. Can the smith have the horse if I do it?'

"The peasant assented. The horse was taken out. Adam poured the pease into a large bed-tick, and carried them straight to 'The Crown;' then he took the wagon-body, and, finally, he carried the two large wheels, one on each shoulder. 'Which is the stronger, your horse, or I?' he asked of the peasant; and from that time, he has been called 'The Horse.'

"The way in which Speidel-Röttmann made known his son's feat shows his ambitious nature; for truly he is not a bad man, only a braggart of the first degree. The day after the horse-deed of Adam, there was a fair in town; and, in the inn, the smith met Speidel-Röttmann, and began to tell him what had taken place: but he interrupted the smith by saying, 'Do not tell me here, but go down into the street, and I will give you a bottle of my best wine, if you will call out the whole story to me at the window.' And so he lay far out the window, and listened while the smith repeated it to him. He certainly takes great delight in his

son; but he has not dared to show it, on account of his wife, especially for the last seven years.

"Just over the bridge — you can see his little house from the window — lives a turner of clock-cases and sign-boards, who is called, on that account, 'Schilder-David.' He is very proud; for, although he is one of the poorest in the village, he would rather starve than take any thing in charity; and yet he keeps a light burning later at night than any one, for he is a devout reader of the Scriptures. He has a Bible that he has read from beginning to end sixteen times. I saw it once, and the leaves were then falling apart; for David always points with four fingers when he reads. On the fly-leaf were written the dates, — when he began and when he finished each time. The longest time was a little over two years; but three times he read it through in less than a year, — once, when his daughter left home; the second time, when he had a lame hand, and everybody thought he would lose it; and the last time, the year his little grandson was born. In his youth, they say, he was the merriest fellow in the village, and could sing songs without number. He once earned a cord of wood by singing. He went to Speidel-Röttmann to buy some. 'Sing to me, David,' said Röttmann, who was in a good mood; 'and, for every song, I will myself carry a log of wood to your door.' So David sang, and gained so many logs, that the boys

in the village gave him the name of 'Klafter-David;' but he does not like to be called so now.

"His wife is one of those persons (there are a good many in our parish) who never seem to be more than half awake. She goes about the house, and does her work day by day, but seldom speaks to any one. She has, besides, been very deaf for a few years. She had five daughters, tall, noble-looking girls; and, when they were still children, their father would often say, that they must sometime go over the water, to America, and make their fortunes. And, in truth, four did go, — two with their husbands, and two who have since been married. One of them has lately died; but the others are settled there, and are living comfortably. Now, David says that America is a new dragon that takes our children from us; for he cannot help longing to see these daughters who have been away so long. He has often talked of going to them; but he is getting too old now, and, besides, I believe he no longer wishes to go. His youngest daughter, Martina, was the pride of her father; for she was the first in her school. You do not know what a character that gives one in the village. A girl, especially, wins a certain reputation and respect, which she keeps to her latest day. Martina was a good, sensible girl, and very considerate, too. I remember, when she came to the priest, before confirmation, how carefully she wiped her shoes with

a broom, and how she kept back the others, that they might not carry any dust into the room; and she and her companions swept and cleaned the entire church for Confirmation-Sunday. I never saw any one more beautiful than she was, as she stood before the altar. She was large and tall for her age; and there was an expression of sweetness and holiness on her face, that seemed to throw a glory about her. She often came to our house, and Otho was very fond of the child. He told me that he met her in the field, the day after the confirmation, and she said she felt as if she had left her home now, and had gone out into the world; and she did, in reality, very soon go out; for she was only sixteen when she entered Röttmann's service. He gave her very high wages, as indeed he was obliged to do, to induce any one to stay with his wife. She staid two years" —

The speaker was suddenly interrupted here by footsteps, and the tinkling of bells.

"What is that?" asked her brother.

"Those are the donkeys going from the mill. They carry corn and meal up and down the mountain. I have something to send Toni, and I wish I had thought to give it to the boy; but it's too late now."

She sat silent a few moments, till, at her brother's request, she continued: —

CHAPTER IV.

MARTINA'S RETURN.

IN the Saturday noon before St. John's Day, several years ago, a woman was crouching on the ground, behind the great rock that hangs over the brook. As she remained thus, one of the villagers — Lois, we call her here — came to the place, having wandered a little from the road, on her way from the forest-mill. This woman is full of superstition, although nobody says more against it than she; and when she saw, on this day, the figure behind the rock, she thought it a ghost, and cried aloud in terror. At this, the crouching figure stood up; and Lois saw it was

Martina, who said she had come there to die, but she felt she must live for the sake of her child. Lois sat down with her, listened to her, consoled her, and promised to be god-mother to the child (for here they think it a great misfortune for any one to come into the world without a god-mother; and, even if a child dies, they think he will be doubly blessed, to have had one); and finally she brought Martina back to the village with her.

"It was in the afternoon of that day, as Otho and I were sitting in the garden, that we heard, from the other side of the brook, a shriek that made us spring to our feet; and, before we came to the garden-gate, Lois, pale as death, rushed in, crying, 'Dear sir, for heaven's sake, go to Schilder-David's! He is murdering Martina!' My husband hurried away, and I was following him; but he called to me to remain at home. Lois had sunk upon the ground; but fortunately I had some coffee to give her, and she was soon able to tell me her story. When David, who was splitting wood before his house, saw Martina, he raised his axe, and would have struck her with it, had not some neighbors run and caught it from him; then he placed himself before the house-door, and swore he would kill Martina if she ever crossed the threshold. Martina fell down before the door, and some women carried her into the house; and when she opened her eyes in the little room, and saw her

confirmation-certificate upon the wall, under a glass and frame, she uttered a cry so piercing that we heard it even here. She fell down again, and lay unconscious. The women tried to rouse her; but David cried, 'Do not bring her back to life, for I will send her from the house! O God! make me blind! Pluck out my eyes! America has robbed me of three children; and now, now' —

"He rushed again towards Martina; but the neighbors seized him, and held him while Lois ran for my husband.

"We waited a long time for Otho. At last we saw him coming, leading David by the arm, who had his hat drawn over his eyes, and was stumbling like a blind man: he was saying, 'Good priest, lock me up, for I am no longer master of myself. My child, my best child, my only child! She was the crown of my old age, as you told her in your address at her confirmation, and so — Great God! why do you punish me so severely? Why cannot I depart in peace? O sir! when we see our children eat what is good for them, it is better for us than if we ate it ourselves. We feed them and take care of them, and are happy to see them happy and strong; we teach them all the wisdom and goodness we can; we send them to school, and rejoice to have them learn, to see them work, to hear them sing: and, when we think they are going to be our greatest blessing, every

thing is lost. My other daughters have gone out into the world; and they live, although they are dead to me, and I to them: my Martina has lived at home, before my very eyes, and now is worse than dead. If a child is upright, we are doubly happy; but a sinful child can make a parent doubly and a thousand times unhappy. I try to think; but I cannot find — I cannot find wherein I have failed in my duty to her; and yet I must have failed: and my good name' — He saw me now, and cried, sobbing aloud, 'Lady, you, too, have always loved her! She has given me my death-blow. I feel it.'

"His feet could hardly carry him. We helped him into the house, and here he sat for a full hour, without moving. He held his hand before his face; but his tears ran through his fingers.

"At last he stood up erect, and spoke. 'God will reward you, sir,' said he. 'Here's my hand. May I never have a decent burial, if I make Martina,' — his tears stopped him as he uttered that name, — 'if I make Martina suffer, either by word or deed! God has punished me through her. I must have been a great sinner. I was too proud of my children, and particularly of her; and now she is humbled enough. I will not sin more.'

"My husband wanted to go home with him; but he refused. 'No,' said he: 'I must learn to walk through the streets alone with my sorrow. I have

been too proud. My head is bowed now, till I go to my grave. Thank you a thousand times, and may God reward you!'

"The old man, who before had always walked so erect, was a pitiable sight as he went homeward; and now, for the first time, my husband told me how frightful it was at David's house. But the people who were there have also told me how gentle and patient beyond any thing they ever saw, Otho was with the old man, who seemed about to tear them all to pieces in his fury, and kept crying, 'I am Job! Stretch down thy hand, O Lord! and tear my tongue from my throat; for I must curse, curse the whole world. There is no goodness, — no, neither in heaven nor on earth.' My husband succeeded in calming him; but I never saw Otho so exhausted as he was after the old man had left us.

"Lois stood god-mother to little Joseph, and Adam came to the christening in the village. He wanted David to walk with him to the church, that every one might see them together; but David would not. At home, Adam has had to suffer for coming; for he has since been kept a prisoner, and been watched by certain spies whom his mother pays.

"David was always a constant attendant at church; but, after his little grandson was born, he did not go for two months. When the church-bells rang, he would lament that he could not go;

and then, if no one was in the house, he would carry his little grandchild up and down the room.

"The boy seemed to possess a charm over him: he would carry Joseph about, and watch the child as tenderly as a woman. For an hour at a time, he has been seen standing at his garden-gate, with the boy in his arms, after working-hours, or on Sundays. The old man, indeed, partly gave up smoking on account of the boy, although he used never to be without a pipe in his mouth. When Joseph began to walk, his grandfather was his constant companion; and, when he was old enough to play with other children, if David came in sight, in the midst of any game, he would leave every thing to remain by his grandfather's side. If a child could be spoiled by devotion, he would certainly be. You can never see the old man, without hearing him repeat some of Joseph's remarkable sayings; and indeed, honest as David is, he has such a habit of doing this, that he often tells things which the child never has said. I know, however, some things, which show the peculiar thoughtfulness of the boy. The other day, a child was born in the village, and, on the same day, one died; and Joseph said, 'Grandfather, when a little boy is born, doesn't he go to sleep in heaven, and wake up on earth? And, when he dies, doesn't he go to sleep on earth, and wake up in heaven?' He has been with his grandfather so constantly, that he

has heard the old people in the village talk, and he knows about every thing that has taken place here."

"Why don't you tell me about Martina?" interrupted the listener.

"There isn't much to tell about her. She lives at home quietly, and says but little to any one; but, whenever there is any trouble among the neighbors, she is always ready to lend a helping hand. She shows an inexpressible love for her father, and he repays this love in the best way possible, — by devoting himself to little Joseph."

"And the father, Adam? — what does he do?"

"He lives at home also, and, as I have said, is kept a prisoner by his parents, and seems to think it is enough, if he does not marry Martina, not to marry any one else. His parents have tried to persuade him to give her up; and they have also made splendid offers to her of marriage-portions, if she will accept one of the many suitors they have sent to her house; but she always gives the same answer, 'I could have another husband, if I would; but Joseph could not have another father if he would.'

"There is a cousin of Martina's, a well-to-do shoemaker, who lives a bachelor, and will not marry any one but her. They call him Häspele (the reeler); and, indeed, I don't know his real name. After his work is over, he often reels the yarn

which the village girls have spun, which has given him the name. He is a good-natured fellow, and every year, at the Carnival, he plays the clown the whole week; so, whenever he is seen, people are always joking with him; and his appearance and voice are so peculiar, that one hardly knows whether he is in earnest, or jesting. His nose is so red, it seems as though it were always rouged. He is very fond of Martina, and she loves him too, but in the same way that all the girls in the village love him. People think he will never marry —

"Thank heaven!" cried the speaker, interrupting herself, "my husband must now be in the house if nothing has happened to him, which God forbid! It would be the most beautiful Christmas Eve, the best Christmas-gift, if he could convert Röttmann's wife! Speidel-Röttman himself would yield then, and we could remain here; for it was this trouble that made Otho decide to go away. These wild people still persist that Adam shall marry the miller's daughter, Toni; and they are making arrangements for the betrothal, to-morrow. She is the only one in the village they think of high standing enough for their son. The miller's family and Röttmann's are the best, or, what means the same thing, the richest, in our parish. She herself has a young step-mother, and is so unhappy at home that she is willing to go anywhere, even to hell itself. I

must say I never could bear to see Adam go to the church with Toni; and, for my husband, it is frightful! There he must stand, and open his inmost heart, and preach holiness, goodness, and truth, and know that in the foremost seats there sit persons to whom all that he says is nothing but empty words.

"I hear the watchman calling twelve. Now Otho is certainly in the house, and I know he is doing good. Now let us go to bed!"

CHAPTER V.

THE MORNING IS DARK.

MARTINA remained as restless all night as if she knew some one was telling the story of her life. She was so impatient, it seemed as if she must go forth into the world, and change her whole being. The cocks crowed louder and louder, and now and then the lowing of a cow or the barking of a dog was heard. It must be near day.

She arose, dressed herself, and kindled a fire in the room down stairs. There must be a good breakfast this morning, for Lois was coming early to make a new corduroy jacket for Joseph. On the table lay a slate, on which the child had drawn, the evening before, a large, hideous figure of a man, and had said, "That is my father!"

Martina wiped out the drawing, and wished she

had also the power to wipe from the memory of the child what she had told him when she put him to bed. She had promised him that his father would come; and that was the reason he had asked so many times in the night, "Isn't it morning, yet?"

Martina gazed a long time into the bright blaze of the fire, and almost unconsciously she sang, —

"The heart that has once truly loved
Must still love on forever:
Oh! doubly happy must he be
Who, loving, doubteth never.

All eyes do sadly follow me
Wherever I may go;
Yet thee I never can forsake,
However great my woe."

Presently she took a pail on her arm, and opened the house-door; but such a strong, icy wind was blowing, that she stopped a moment to draw her red kerchief more tightly over her head and shoulders before she went out. She hastened to the well by the church, which was the only one in the village that was not frozen. A number of women and girls were waiting there for their turns, chatting together, and uttering loud cries whenever water was spilt from a pail, as they could hardly stand on the icy ground. The sun sent a few rays into the valley below, but soon withdrew them, and hid himself behind a cloud. The fields and meadows glistened with hoar-frost,

and every thing was freezing without its protecting cover of snow, which could be seen only on the mountain.

"Thank heaven, the clouds are bringing us snow at last!"

"The fields need it enough. It's a great pity every thing should be spoilt."

"We always have snow at Christmas, and sleighing New Year's."

Thus the women talked at the well, and their words were turned to light clouds before their mouths.

"Is it true," asked an old woman of Martina, who had just come, — "is it true that the priest was called last night to your mother-in-law?"

"I believe your father-in-law would like to make that tree that killed Vincent, into a coffin for the old scold."

"It would be good if she did die; and then you could have your Adam."

"And become a good farmer's wife."

"I would like to pray her to death! The tailor in Knuslingen knows a prayer that will kill anybody."

"No: you ought to curse to death."

The women kept up an animated discussion, until Martina, who had filled her pail, and put it upon her head, said, "Do not talk so wickedly: to-night is the holy evening."

She went slowly homeward, as if the words that were spoken still behind her held her back. And she became greatly agitated, as she thought that perhaps Joseph had had a presentiment of what was taking place on the mountain, and that was the reason he had been so restless. She had reproached Adam that he did not also suffer; and perhaps in that same hour he was suffering the intensest pain a human being can, — that of seeing what is dearest on the earth die in bitterness and unforgiveness.

Those at the well were no longer in a hurry. They stood leaning over their pails, or with them on their heads, and talked about Martina.

"She would like to go to the parsonage now."

"She isn't very wise. Old Röttmann offered to give her two thousand florins, if she would set free the father of her child; but she would not."

"And Schilder-David would not either."

"Good-morning, Häspele!" suddenly called a voice. "How are your hens? are they all well?"

"Doesn't one of your roosters crow Spanish? Do you understand him?"

So the only man was greeted who came to the well to draw water. It was Häspele. He wore a light-gray waistcoat, and a many-colored night-cap, under which a merry face looked out.

"Martina has just been here, and will come again," said one woman who was leaving.

Häspele smiled, and thanked her. He waited, and helped all the women draw their water; and, just as he was filling his own pail, Martina came back. He went away with her, and they walked down the street together; for Häspele passed Martina's house on his way home. As they walked, she told him that last night the priest had been summoned to Röttmann's wife, and had not yet returned; and she could not help expressing the hope that the good man would touch the woman's hard heart. But Häspele said, "No: do not believe that. The wolf that is in our neighborhood would sooner come into my house, and let me tie a ribbon around his neck, like my goat, than that wild woman would repent. I have told you every thing that happened a week ago, when I carried Adam his new boots; and I have brought you the message that he would come to-day without fail. I believe myself, as the others do, that you will set him free."

Martina did not answer; but, at the door of her house, she stopped suddenly, and cried, "See! there is the priest coming home!"

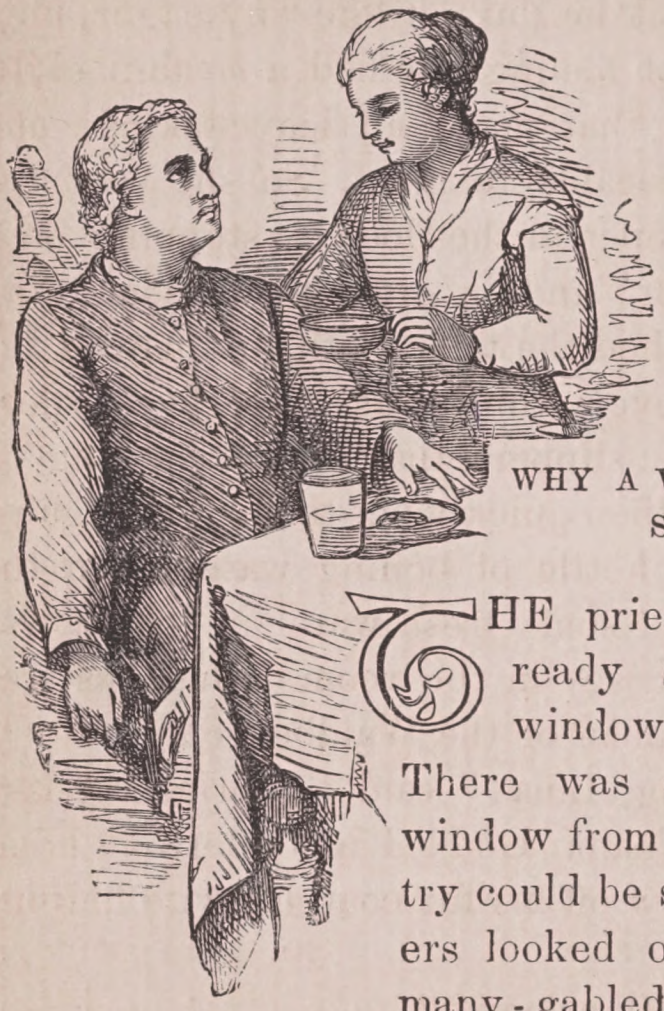
Opposite, on the carriage-road (Martina's house stood on the other side of the brook), an open sleigh was moving slowly up the street. A man, closely wrapped in fur, with a fur cap drawn over his eyes, sat beside the driver, who was smoking, and who now, snapping his whip, nodded to Martina.

It was one of the boys from the Röttmann Farm whom she knew. She gave her hand to Häspele, and then went into the house. Häspele hastened home.

As she was trying to shut the door, a woman's voice called, "Stop! let me in!"

"Good-morning, Lois! I am glad you have come so early," said Martina; and the neighbor, who, in spite of the cold, had come in slippers with high heels, helped her to take the pail from her head, for which Martina thanked her: for Lois does not often help any one except in sewing; and, when she does, the favored one feels quite flattered. It is a great kindness, too, for her to come the day before Christmas; for she is wanted by all the women of the neighborhood.

Wherever she goes, she is treated with great respect. This is shown by Martina's opening wide the door of the room, and waiting for her to enter. But a chilling welcome awaited her here; for little Joseph cried, "Oh, dear! it's only Lois!"



CHAPTER VI.

WHY A VILLAGE PRIEST IS SUMMONED.

THE priest's wife was already standing at the window, and gazing out. There was only one corner window from which the country could be seen; for the others looked out upon a large, many-gabled barn, which a peasant had built there to spite the former priest; and, now that a good priest was there, it could not be removed. She could not see far, however, for the day was one of those which seem but a twilight between one night and another: the sun was but a faint yellow spot behind the thick clouds that lay low over the whole country. As soon as she saw the sleigh, she nodded and smiled, but did not open the window, or move away. She

would have hastened down to greet her husband; but she knew that he did not like any eager, public expressions of feeling: he had a certain child-like bashfulness that made all leave-takings and welcomes disagreeable to him. So she sent the maid down, and opened the door by stepping on a knob in the floor; and, in order to do something more, she smoothed the table-cloth, and moved the cups, although every thing was in perfect order; she took up the slippers that were warming in front of the fire, then quickly put them down again; she moved the kettle of boiling water from the stove, and poured some fresh water in it. It was very warm and cosey in the room. One has free quarters in the midst of the Waldbergen.

"Good-morning, Lina!" said the priest, at last, coming in. "Thank God! I am safely at home again." He drew off his fur coat, his wife helping him.

"Is Edward still asleep?"

"No: he has gone hunting. I sent him to meet you; did you not see him?"

"No."

The air in the room seemed too close for the priest, who went to the window, opened it, and stood a few minutes before it, and said, "It is well you did not think of the wolf that is about here, and of which everybody is complaining: you would certainly have persuaded yourself that the monster was devouring me."

"Come, sit down and warm yourself," replied the wife, and poured a cup of steaming coffee. "Come, I will hold the cup for you; for your fingers must be too stiff: take a swallow. Now, why did Röttmann's cruel wife send for you last night? No, no, drink first! There is time enough to answer me. I can wait."

"Lina," said the priest, and a peculiar smile played over his face, —"Lina, be proud! I must be a man with a remarkable power of entertaining. Ah! the coffee is good. Think, Lina! it was just one o'clock — I heard it strike at Wengern — when we drove up to Röttmann's house. My reception was very noisy. I was greeted with a loud welcome, and was not able to alight; for the good people had left the dogs loose. They thought it was not necessary to fasten them if the priest was coming; for they had the beautiful belief that the word of God could subdue even fierce beasts in the night. It was some time before the dogs were chained, and I could leave the sleigh. Pour me another cup. This coffee is very good."

"And what happened then?" asked his wife.

The priest looked at her for a minute, and smiled; then he continued, "The snow was knee-deep; but, if it does wet us so mercilessly, it is at the same time clean. I succeeded in making my way over the doomed logs, and went into the house. 'Where is your master?' I asked. 'In bed.'—'Is

he sick, also?'—'No: he is asleep.'—'What! I am called to a dying woman, and her husband sleeps? They are tender-hearted people here.' Well, I went to the sick woman's chamber. 'Thank heaven! you have come, sir.'—'What! is that the voice of the dying one,' I asked, 'to whom I am summoned in the middle of the night?'—'Ah! dear sir,' said Röttmann's wife, 'you are so good, so extremely good, you can talk so well, and tell one so much, that she quite forgets she is sick. I have been lying here seven days and nights, and have hardly closed my eyes; and I cannot tell you how tedious it is. It seemed to me the hours would never pass to-night, and so I sent for you: you are so good, you will talk with me a little while. My husband does not know that you have come. He does nothing for me; he goes out as often as he can, and, when he is at home, he hardly speaks to me; he wishes I had died a long time ago. And Adam, my only son, he, too, appears as though he would be glad to have me die. O sir! when one has to lie, day after day, in a lonely house, and do nothing, every day is an eternity, and every night is three. If my Vincent only lived, he would stay by me day and night; he would talk to me as no one else can. So, good priest, sit down and say something to me. Will you not take a glass of gin? That will warm you: you must take it! No, you must not refuse me! Catherine, take down that green

bottle, the last one, and pour out some.' How do you think I felt, Lina, as I heard this steady flow of words from the woman?"

"I could hardly have helped cursing the old dragon. Unfeeling creature! to drag you out of the house, up the snowy mountain, this cold December night."

"When a wolf is in the neighborhood!" added the priest.

"Let the wolf be," continued the wife. "This woman is the worst wolf. You told her what you thought?"

"By all means. And with you I may be a little vain; I can say that I never felt better satisfied with myself in my life. I can hardly help laughing now at this perfectly childish want of consideration. Children always think entirely of themselves, and never of the sacrifices they demand of others; and, say what you will, there was a certain simplicity in this deed of Röttmann's wife. She thought only of herself, and did not know what she was doing. Of course, I did not conceal from her that it was very selfish to disturb in this way the night's rest of another, and that I did not feel flattered that she valued my power of conversation so highly, and summoned me to her house, and sent a sleigh for me.

"Still, as I was there, and my sleep out of the question, I talked with her as well as I could; and

she did her part in the conversation. She talked very well, or rather very badly; for she enjoys most relating the worst acts of men, and saying how useless the present generation is; and she constantly repeated, 'When I die, I will pray God for one mercy, — to give me a sign that I may know who were the murderers of my Vincent, so that they may be hanged and burned, even if they are half the village.' You know upon this theme she is imaginative in the highest degree. I have proofs that she did not love Vincent while he lived; but now she persuades herself that her love for him was so deep that it is all buried in his grave; for there is no heart so bad, that it does not seek some excuse for its wickedness, and believe it has once loved something, for whose sake every thing else must be despised. I spoke to her conscience, and told her it was well to love the dead, but for the dead we could do nothing, — only for the living; and that she ought at last to forgive Adam and Martina. I pictured to her the joy she would have in her little grandson; I sought to persuade her that she had sent for me on this very account, but had hesitated to confess it to me openly. But I really think there must be a wolf wandering about there; for the yell the woman uttered must have been learnt from one. I shudder as I remember it. I thought she would surely die with rage. She tore her cheeks with her nails, she gasped for

breath, she fell back on her pillow; but soon she recovered herself, and, rising up, cried, 'I thank thee, Lord! dear Lord, I thank thee! Let me live, let me live long, even as I am; for, if I cannot stand, I can still cry, cry, and I will cry with my latest breath, "I will not allow it! I will not allow that a beggar's daughter shall be a Röttmann's wife!" Why are there no men who will send such a good-for-nothing, together with her child, out of the world? The very priests are nothing but lazy black-coats! There is no fear of God among them. They would have baseness and sin rewarded with good. She ought to stand before the church, with a straw crown, and do penance for her sins; but here she shall never come. And if our Lord from heaven should come down, and if he should send a thousand such — such hypocrites, and if they should strangle me, I would still cry, "I will not suffer it!" and to-day, to-day, must the preparation be made.'

"Waked by the cry, the father and son had hastened thither; and the old man seemed to take it for granted that I had forced myself into the house, and gave me clearly to understand that he would defend his wife, let Schilder-David send whom he would. Adam stood still, with his hands folded, and looked supplicatingly at me: I never thought he could show so much feeling. I felt like a person in a fairy tale, who had come to bring help to

demons. 'Is this a human family? Are these persons to whom, for ten years, I have preached the gospel of love?' I said to myself. Every word I tried to speak, froze on my lips. I could only tell them to harness the horses again, and take me home. No one heard me, however; but at length Adam said, 'I will carry you home, sir; forgive all that has taken place!'

"'No,' cried his mother, 'you shall not! Hold him, Christopher! He could then marry his beggar-maid.' The father commanded Adam to stay; and then he swore to his wife, with his hand on the Bible I had just laid down (it seemed dreadful to me to hear him swearing by this book), — he swore solemnly that he would conclude the betrothal of Adam with the miller's daughter to-day.

"I do not know how I got out of the house; but, when I did, I called to the boy who had brought me, and said I would walk on a pace or two, and he could soon overtake me with the sleigh. I went down the mountain, in the early dawn; and it seemed to me that I was fleeing from a hell where devils dwelt. I do not think I lost my way, but suddenly I found myself face to face with the wolf. The animal stood still a minute, and gazed at me, as if considering what to do, and finally went quietly into the woods. I must confess I trembled all over; and never in my life did I feel such a chill as at that moment. It was intensely cold, and

I had been very unwise to start. I waited a long time, and no one came. 'The rascal,' I thought, 'is comfortable in the house, and is going to let me walk home.' I turned back, and now vexation and bitterness made me warm. Not far from the house, I met the boy driving slowly. I found then, for the first time, the cherry-brandy you gave me, which did me much good. While I was riding home, in a half-waking state, I cannot tell you what passed through my soul. Solomon, in Ecclesiastes, has written about a wicked woman; and I think I could add an appendix to his writings. But, dear heart! where were goodness and love, if there were no bad men to prove it? Still, I am very glad I have decided to leave the village. The fifty years I shall soon number need a more peaceful work. I have bored enough hard wood in my youth; but, come what may, I shall remain firm in this: I will marry Adam to no one but Martina."

Recovering her breath, and wiping a tear from her eye, his wife replied, "Yes, I shall be glad when we are in another place, among men of gentler manners, who can appreciate you better."

"Do not forget," said the priest, "that, if we have had to contend with much rudeness and coarseness, we have found also many good men here. In our new home, there will also be both good and bad persons, and work enough. But now I am excessively tired, and must go to sleep.

Keep the house quiet, and do not call me before eleven. Good-night, or rather good-morning! When I get up, a year will have passed since that Röttmann-night."

He went into his chamber, which was ingeniously heated by the same stove that heated the parlor; for the stove was placed in the wall. Soon it was still as midnight in the house. The wife went about on tiptoe, and threw a cloth over the cage of the bird, to keep him quiet. The noisy, importunate beggars outside, the sparrows and the goldhammers, had a second breakfast this morning. The wind quickly carried away the crumbs which the housewife placed on the window-sill; and the hungry birds flew far after them, as if they knew the priest must not be waked. The good woman then sat by the window, with her embroidery, and made a sign to every one who was approaching to make no noise: she saw the most welcome of all sights in the country,— the post-boy coming to the house,— and hastened out in order that he might not ring. She received several parcels from her parents and brothers and sisters: she did not open them, however, because she wanted her husband to have the pleasure of the surprise with her. One of the letters bore the seal of a dean; but none was directed to her.

CHAPTER VII.

SCHILDER-DAVID'S HOME.

"OH, dear! it is only Lois!" little Joseph had exclaimed; and thereupon his grandfather had given him a hearty box on the ear. The child cried, his grandfather scolded, and his mother scolded and cried at the same time; for her father would not let her appease the boy with a coaxing word. Lois said in a wise, somewhat nasal tone, "This is frightful, — this reception that I meet. I ought to turn round and go back. We might be superstitious about it; but, for heaven's sake! let us have no superstition. That is the worst thing in the world: it makes us torment ourselves about things that never have been, while there are enough things already to trouble us. No, I will stay. Good-morning, Joseph! Come, and say good-morning to me. Come, give me your hand."

"He did not sleep at all last night, and did not know what he said," Martina apologized.

"We need no excuses, and will say no more about it," said Lois, laying her shears, scissors, needles, and wax on the table, by the side of the best pin-cushion, which was a large covered brick.

This was the act that gave her dominion over the whole household, and from this moment she ruled, as from a throne; for she never stood up after she had sat down for the day. Before she took her seat, however, she went into the chamber, and came back with one petticoat less; for she was very particular about her appearance when on the street, and never suffered herself to sit down in her best petticoat. Returning, she moved the table to a convenient place, took her station, while Martina pushed a stool under her feet, and began to issue her commands briefly and clearly; and first she said, "Martina, bring on the breakfast!"

Martina brought the oat-meal, and placed it on the table. Joseph said grace, and chose to-day the shortest of all his prayers: —

> "To all poor children, day by day,
> Give thou their food and drink, we pray. Amen."

He had now dried his tears, and was sitting quietly between his grandparents. After the prayer, it was very still and peaceful at the table, each one helping himself from the pan, with a spoon.

In the room, every thing was scrupulously clean, but very poor and mean. In the wall above the oven, just over a tall, old-fashioned chair, a brass-headed nail was driven, on which Martina's confirmation-certificate had once hung: the nail was empty now, and nothing would ever again be on it. Martina always avoided looking at it; but David had given strict directions that it should not be taken out.

The head of the house, Schilder-David, was a man of many years, — he could not tell himself how old he was, — with thick, snow-white hair, closely cut, and a white, slightly-curling beard extending to his temples; but his face had a youthful freshness, as had also his deep-blue eyes, which seemed out of place under those heavy black eyebrows.

His wife, like him, was tall and slender; but her face — one could tell very little about that, for it was always bound about with two or three handkerchiefs. When she spoke, you quickly perceived that she was deaf, by the loud tone and apparent exertion, which showed that she could not hear herself.

Neighbor Lois's face was handsome, pale, — a rather remarkable face: no longer young, it had traces of a former, peculiar beauty. She always dressed tastefully. To-day, her jacket of black cloth was fastened only at the neck, and let her neat white stomacher be seen beneath. Who did

not know it, would hardly see, that, from time to time, she took a pinch of snuff: her box was never visible; and she took it so quickly and gracefully, that she scarcely touched with the tips of her fingers her delicately-cut nose.

Little Joseph we could not believe was six years old only three weeks before: he seemed three years older. Compact and powerful in his limbs, what they call in the country "a well-fattened boy," he had wild, light-brown curls, with which his dark eyes and heavy eyebrows contrasted strangely. He was in truth the central point in the house, and his foolish welcome had disturbed every one. All were silent, therefore, at the meal; once, Lois remarked that the priest had been to the Röttmann Farm the night before; but Schilder-David quickly replied, "Say nothing of the Röttmanns," and looked significantly from Lois to Joseph; and no one spoke again.

They rose from the table. Joseph was measured for his jacket; lines were drawn with chalk on the green corduroy; and then Lois's great shears cut out the garment with a humming, snapping noise.

"You will stay at home to-day: the mill is frozen," Schilder-David said, as he went to his workshop, which was a small room in the granary of the lower saw-mill. Here a lathe stood, with a band passing from it around a cylinder, which was connected with the great wheel in the mill, so that

the water-power which worked the large machinery turned also the lathe with which David made his clock-cases.

Little Joseph stood as if forsaken when his grandfather went away alone, so contrary to their custom. Before, the boy had always been with him, and had lighted his fire with shavings, laid the boards in their right places, and put every thing in order.

His mother called him into the kitchen, and there asked him, "Why did you say so rudely, 'Oh, dear! it's only Lois'? What did you mean by it? She is so good to you, is your god-mother, and is making you such a pretty jacket!"

Joseph was silent. A child hardly knows what he has done a few minutes before, is not conscious of any motive in his thoughts, and therefore cannot explain his acts: his words are like the song of birds, without rhythm, yet coming from a hidden life.

After a pause, Joseph said, "Mother, isn't father coming to-day? You said he was."

"He is coming, he will certainly come," answered Martina, and sighed deeply. Now it was plain to her why the boy had exclaimed, "Oh, dear! it's only Lois." When she had held the door open, Joseph had thought it was for his father, and had uttered a cry of disappointment to see some one else. Now he continued talking of his

father, who was to come on a great horse, and bring him one of his own.

Martina tried to turn the thoughts of the child; but it was of no avail. She had herself told him too much of his father; had talked to him often when she believed she had talked to herself in her heart's distress: and now all the boy's imagination and thought were centred on this father, of whom he had formed a most wonderful conception; and he had asked again and again why his grandparents were so unkind to his father, whom they did not let come home.

"Which way will he come?" he said.

"I do not know."

"Yes, you do. Tell me! You do know!" And the child began to cry. His mother quickly drew him to her, and whispered, "Be still, be perfectly still, so that no one can hear us; and then I will tell you."

With a great effort, he stopped his tears; and his mother told him what beautiful presents he would have for Christmas, and asked him what he would like best. He wished a horse, and nothing else. The people had told him his father had fourteen in his barn. But all this diversion did not prevent him from repeating his question, "Tell me, which way will he come?"

His mother softly whispered, "You must not say a word to any one about your father's coming

to-day; give me your hand, and promise, not a word!" The boy gave his hand, and looked at her with his tearful eyes wide open.

She was silent. She thought he was appeased; but in a minute, he asked again, with obstinate persistency, "Which way will he come?"

"There are many ways; but I think he will come up the valley. Now, that is enough; not a word more! Go and bring me some fir-cones from the shed!" The child did as he was directed; and the mother said to herself, smiling, "He is going to be a very firm man: when he makes up his mind to do a thing, he will do it."

She went back to the parlor with Joseph; but Lois said, "Send him out! We cannot say any thing before a child."

"Joseph, go to Häspele's: you know he is making you some new boots," said Martina. Joseph, however, did not want to go, and it was necessary to put him by force out of the house. There he stood defiantly, and said, "When father comes, I will tell him every thing: I can't stay anywhere, neither with grandfather, nor at home." He went to Häspele's, where he became at once bright and cheerful; for the shoemaker loved the boy, and was always ready with stories if the playthings he gave ceased to amuse. For a long time, he had promised Joseph a dog; and the child was very curious to know how the animal would look, and what tricks

he would do. Häspele always had a good excuse for not finding the dog: sometimes he said he wanted one that was large, and sometimes small; at one time the dog should have four white feet, and at another be all brown; sometimes should be a wolf-dog, and sometimes a pointer.

In the mean time, Lois was talking with Martina, and thought it incredible that the latter had not ascertained whether her chief enemy were yet in the world: she ought to go immediately to the parsonage, and ask after Röttmann's wife.

"You remember," said Martina, "that once the priest liked to have me come to his house, but that now he does not. I cannot go without an excuse."

"Well! Go to my house, and you will find on my bureau with the looking-glass, in a china soup-plate, three night-caps that belong to the priest's wife; take them to her from me, and then you can hear how Röttmann's wife is."

Martina did as Lois bade her.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRIEST'S COMFORTABLE HOME.

CAN there be a holy festival for such a woman as Röttmann's wife? Can there be a human soul that must go out of the world, and never have experienced that solemn delight that makes one's own life, and the life of mankind, a blessing? That there can be, casts a shadow over the world, and leaves no one entirely happy.

Thus the priest's wife thought, as she sat by the window; but she soon drove away all dark reflections, and in her soul it became like the clear morning of an endless festival, which is a spark of eternity. She stood up, and went about the house peacefully, like one beatified. The coming holiday, and the thought that her brother was with her, threw a light and a joy around her whole being, so that she smiled upon every thing; and

while she prepared a good breakfast for her brother, who, she knew, would come back hungry from the chase, she smiled at the ham, the butter, and the eggs, as if she must thank them for giving nourishment and strength to man. They could not answer; but the maid perceived that her mistress liked to talk of her brother, and said, "Your brother is a fine young man: when he came yesterday, I thought it was the prince who passed through the village, last winter, on his way to the chase."

She wiped her face with her apron, as if to make herself look fine, and added, "I'm glad we've killed the goose," as she cast an admiring glance at it hanging by the kitchen window.

It was nearly ten o'clock when brother Edward came back. His sister told him the priest was asleep; and he placed his gun in the corner as quietly as if it had been made of cotton. She was delighted with his hunter's appetite, and sat beside him with her embroidery, relating the priest's adventures. Her brother said he had done nothing; for, although he had been close upon the tracks of the wolf, the animal escaped him in a ravine, where he could not go alone. He had been as far as the forest-mill; and he described with great enthusiasm the magnificent yet awful landscape, — how the waterfalls were frozen, and large rocks shone all over like polished mirrors. And, the more awful he pictured the country without, the more com-

fortable became the room within; and so softly did the brother and sister speak together, while the warmth diffused itself through the room, that the clicking of the clock, and the crackling of the wood in the stove, were louder than their voices. Out of doors, a few flakes of snow soon began to fall, moving leisurely as if in play; and in the room it became doubly cheerful.

"I have an adventure to tell you," Edward continued.

"Wait till my husband comes in, so that you will not have to tell it twice."

"No: I shall tell only you; and you must commend my silence. I was standing at a short distance from the forest-mill, behind a bush, waiting for the wolf, when I saw two young girls coming along the road. They stopped not far from my place of concealment; and one of them said, 'I must say farewell to you here. I thank you for your kindness; my mother in heaven will reward you for it: but it is all over; I must — alas! why can one no longer be bewitched into a raven by a wicked woman? I would I were that raven which is passing over us! Then I would not need to go up there, into that burning hell. See, my tears melt the snow where they fall; but a hard heart does not melt, and my father is entirely changed.' She could not say more, for her tears were falling fast; and her companion left her. She turned back

towards the mill; and then I could no longer stay where I was, and I stepped into the road. I was almost sorry I had done so, when I saw the great sorrow that lay on her beautiful young face. I wanted to comfort her, but I did not know what to say; so I only wished her good-morning. She looked at me, and stood quite still for a moment in surprise; then she went on her way."

"That was the miller's Toni," replied his sister, "a good, kind-hearted maiden, who is to be Adam Röttmann's bride."

"Horrible!" exclaimed the farmer.

"Yes, horrible indeed! Toni is the only child of the miller. She had a good mother; and, as long as she lived, the forest-mill was the most honored house in our parish, and the refuge and asylum of the poor. Little Toni always went regularly to school, till four years ago; and it is a good hour and a half's walk from the mill to the school. In winter, she rode on a donkey. Such a child, who would go so far through the woods and rocky valleys to school, must become thoughtful and wise, granting, of course, that she is bright naturally; for there are some stupid persons who never learn any thing of themselves or the world. But little Toni was bright, and she was often heard in the woods singing her songs or reciting her little pieces: she has a beautiful voice. Her mother died two years ago; and the guardian who was appointed to assist

her father is the inn-keeper at Wengern, whose sister soon afterward married the miller; since then, the poor child has had no peace at home, and as her guardian is the brother of her step-mother, she has no one to protect her. So it happens that Toni marries Adam Röttmann."

The priest's wife stopped abruptly, and listened. "Yes, the door must have been left open," she said. "I hear some one coming up the stairs. St! Hush!" she exclaimed, opening the door. "Is it you, Martina? Come in, but quietly, for the priest is asleep. What have you?"

"A kind greeting from Lois, and the caps she sends you."

"Why does she not come herself?"

"She is at our house, making Joseph a new jacket, to-day."

"You dress Joseph too finely: you will spoil him."

"Lois takes no pay from me," said Martina, timorously looking around; and, at this moment, the red kerchief which she had tied over her head fell down upon her neck. The young man looked searchingly at the lovely, oval face with the large, dark-brown eyes. Martina noticed the gaze, and looked down as she groped for the latch of the door. The wife followed her out of the room, and said, "You would like to know how Adam's mother is? She is as she has been, very wicked; but she is by no means very sick, although she sent for the priest in the night."

"God is my witness that I do not wish her death," protested Martina, crossing her hands upon her breast.

"I believe you. The priest had quite a heated dispute with her; but he remains firm, and he will marry Adam to nobody but you. I will tell you all some other time," continued the kind woman, and was going back to the room when Martina exclaimed, —

"O dear lady! I do not know what to think of Joseph for two or three days: he speaks and thinks of nothing but his father. I must tell him about his father when he goes to sleep; and his first word in the morning is of Adam. He will no longer go to school; for the boys call him 'the colt,' as his father is called 'the horse.' And Martina laughed in the midst of her tears. Her listener could not help laughing also; but she quickly replied, however, "I cannot stay with you now, because my youngest brother is here on a visit. Be very firm with the boy, for the whole village is spoiling him, and come to me again after the holiday. Shut the door gently."

Martina went home with a heavy step; and, as she went, she sang again, —

All eyes do sadly follow me
Wherever I may go;
Yet thee I never can forget,
However great my woe."

The priest's wife, in the mean time, had returned to the room, and told her brother Edward that he had a quick eye, not only for landscapes, but also for human beauty. He expressed his deep regret that such gentleness and grace should sorrow in poverty and misery.

"Yes," his sister continued, "as you see her to-day, one could hardly recognize her as the same person who seemed dying for a year after Joseph was born. They say a word of Lois's strengthened her; for the woman said, 'Do not pine away so, or people will say he was right to desert such a lifeless creature.' This speech, and the growth of little Joseph, gave her new life."

While the sister was relating this to Edward, and he was eagerly listening, her head was bent towards the door of the chamber, as if expecting some sound. Now she was satisfied that the priest was awake, for he hummed the song she had sung with her brother the evening before: she immediately sat down at the piano, and sang again with Edward, —

"Nor good nor ill divide us."

The priest came into the room, smiling happily; but he must have heard much in his sleep, for, after a while, he asked, "Lina, is Martina gone? I must beg that my directions are obeyed, and that she does not go in and out of this house."

"She is so gentle!" urged Edward.

"That may be; but it does not relax rigor where it is necessary. He who has sinned may grow better; but the privilege of being at home in a priest's house belongs to him no longer. It is the ruin of all humanity, that it is weakly exempted from punishment."

The face of the priest, that before was so mild, wore now a fixed, stern look. Soon he exclaimed,—

"Edward, give me another of your cigars."

Let us leave the three sitting comfortably together.

CHAPTER IX.

BETROTHAL AND FLIGHT.

AT the Röttmann Farm, no Mozart melodies were known; indeed, since Martina served there, no song had been heard. Still there was noise enough, for there was a constant roasting and stewing of meat; and whoever came towards the house always perceived a smell of fat, which he carried away with him when he went. The reason of this was that Röttmann's wife had whole tubs of melted suet and lard poured every year upon the paths; for she would much rather they should spoil and be wasted, than that they should be given to a poor person.

The men of the house did very little work; for wood-cutters have this advantage over other men, — their possessions increase more rapidly, the less work they do.

The house stood out boldly in the snowy land-

scape. To protect it from the weather, it had been covered with shingles, which were painted red, and gave it the appearance of a fire.

This morning, there was wild confusion at the farm; and what is there more unpleasing than a day begun with noise and disorder? What kind of men must they be, who, waking from sleep, immediately break forth, in the holy calm of the morning, into loud wrangling and clamor, as though there were no sleep, no quiet oblivion for man on the earth, which lets him begin his life anew each day?

The old wife, when she could rest, had always begun early in the morning, as if she were waging a war of annihilation; but now, when she could no longer sleep, her restlessness could hardly be borne. She ruled from her sick-bed with double power, as from a throne; and it is inconceivable what a constant worry and vexation she caused.

"I am well. I am going with you; and, if I die, I am willing, after I have seen the compact made. Do you go, and I will dress myself carefully: now, this very day, it must be arranged with the miller's daughter. Why do you falter, Adam? You should rejoice that I help you — I mean your father and I: by yourself, you would remain in misery all your days, and never come to any thing. If no one else will do it, I will show the turner's family who they are."

The men were dressed in their Sunday clothes, and looked quite stately in their long collarless coats, and high boots that reached above the knees. These high boots are the undisputed right of the higher peasants: the lesser farmers and day-laborers wear, nowadays, shoes, with short trousers of leather, or long ones of ticking. Röttmann's wife, who had not been out of the house for more than a year, was to-day as sprightly as a young girl. The sleigh was brought out, seats placed in it, and the parents, with their son, drove to the forest-mill. A messenger was sent before to announce them. At their arrival, every one was amazed to see the mother. The miller's young wife put on her gentlest demeanor, the daughter could not but be courteous; and in spite of her eyes, red with weeping, she looked so pretty and so neat, that a suitor who came to her with love would have rejoiced. Adam allowed himself to be conducted to the parlor as though he had no longer a will of his own; and, just as the first snow-flakes were falling in the valley, his hand and Toni's were given in pledge, and Adam was betrothed. It was not at all like a living hand that he gave or received; and, after it was over, he drank a long draught of wine which the miller's wife had placed before him.

All sat feasting together till evening. Speidel-Röttmann had an endless capacity for eating and drinking; and now he threw to the right and left

large pieces of meat into the mouths of his two dogs, so that there was a snapping on each side of him. But in drinking, in drinking wine, and much wine, man has a pre-eminence over beasts. Often, when Speidel-Röttmann held his glass to his lips, he stroked the head of the dog on his left, as if to say, "In drinking I alone indulge." Adam was compelled to sit in the kitchen with Toni, while she prepared the mulled wine; and the two old men drank together, and became more and more jovial, while the two mothers were chatting busily. When Röttmann spoke of Martina, and said it could easily be arranged with her, the miller laughed, and said, "The young people nowadays are a good-for-nothing set."

"They haven't a stout heart," rejoined Röttmann. "For seven years past, my Adam has tormented himself, and us too, on account of his folly. What did we care for such things?"

"We didn't care a straw for them!"

"You are right — not a straw! We cared as little as the cuckoo cares. Touch glasses! 'Cuckoo!'"

"You are right! 'Cuckoo!'"

"Empty your glass! 'Cuckoo!'"

"You too! 'Cuckoo!'"

And the two men clinked their glasses, and drank, and called to each other, "Cuckoo!"

The root-wine came: they poured that out, and

drank, and called, "Cuckoo" again; and, after they had drained their glasses to the very dregs, they refilled them repeatedly, and laughed, and told wild, extravagant stories of what they called "daring deeds;" and the conclusion to each was, that the youth of the present time had lost their courage.

In the kitchen, Adam was standing by Toni. For a long time he said nothing, but finally he spoke: "Tell me," he said, "why you have taken me. You know how it is with me."

"As long as the world has been made," she said, weeping, "I am sure no one ever before asked his promised bride such a question; but still, Adam, I am glad you have asked me: it is an honorable and good beginning, if it is God's will that we live together; and it seems it is. Adam, you can never have Martina, and I am wretched, more wretched than you can imagine; and so I have thought, that, since we are both so unhappy, we might perhaps help each other a little; and I must leave my step-mother. I am in her way. You cannot think how one feels to see a stranger come into the house, look into all the closets and chests, and ridicule every thing that is not as fine and magnificent as she wishes. My heart bleeds when I think of all she does; and my father does not oppose it. She has given to one of our servants the cups that belonged to my mother, and no one dared to say

a word against it; and she did it because she knew it would give me pain. I shall become ill-tempered and wicked myself if I remain here. My soul is full of bitterness; and there are words on my lips; and thoughts in my heart — oh, dreadful! I would like best to be lying six feet under the ground, and I should be there now if it had not been for the priest's good wife."

"I am sorry for you," replied Adam; "but I — I have my own mother, but she is worse than any step-mother. I do not like to say so, but I must. My Martina has helped me to bear all, and not to run out into the wide world. Now, for the first time, am I wicked: before I was only thoughtless. I would rather you were ill-tempered and cross, that I need not pity you; then I would tell you that you must give me up: but now — I do not know how to begin — I pity you — yes, I pity you from the bottom of my soul — but only think how it stands with me!"

It was an earnest talk, not a merry chat, that the two were holding, as the maiden stirred the mulled wine by the fire.

The wine was ready at last, and she carried full bowls to the parlor; but first she filled a glass for Adam. When she came back, he drank to her; and when he had emptied the glass, and she had filled it again, and touched it with her own, he said, "You are certainly — you are — prettier than I

thought. It is not so bad, that they drive me to this. If only there were not another, — another, — then would I be quite happy. If I had seen you seven years ago, as you are now, I should be the merriest fellow in the world. Oh! I felt something go through my heart like a knife. Be patient! I cannot say more now."

He sank upon a kitchen chair, held his hand before his eyes for a time, and then he said in a low, indistinct voice, "See! I will tell you. Say nothing to your parents or mine. Give me your hand, and promise that you will say nothing."

She did as he requested, and now both hands were glowing. Adam continued, "This is the very day when I have sent word to my Martina I would come to her. For nearly two years I have been obliged to go to church in another village; and spies have been around me, so that I have not spoken to her or Joseph or the others for a year, and now I must keep my word! And see! I would give you a kiss; but — I will not do it — no, I will not do it — it were a sin till I am free."

"You are good, and you can speak so well!" said Toni, smiling; "and yet they say you are but half-witted."

"They only half know me. No one knows me but Martina: she knew what I was before I ever said a word to her, and I knew her before she ever said a word to me. She noticed, — she is clever, —

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she noticed that I was at the same time the richest and the poorest boy in the Oberland: yes, she will tell you, she can do it so much better than I. Oh! you cannot think how skilful she is, and what a good heart she has, and at the same time she is so cheerful, and so — so " —

Suddenly Adam started. To whom was he speaking? To his betrothed bride! And she was gazing at him vacantly, as if she knew neither where nor who she was. Nothing could be heard but the laughter and voices of the old men, and the whispering of the women. Finally Adam spoke, "So I have your word that you will tell no one? I will now go to my Martina — to Martina and Joseph — to the village. I shall be gone till the tree is lighted; and then it is — or — may God keep you in the mean time!"

The maiden looked wonderingly at him as he threw his gray cloak over his shoulders, put his fur cap on his head, and, taking his stout knobbed stick, swung it gayly in the air. He looked both handsome and frightful when he was ready. He went quickly forth, and Toni sat still on the hearth. After a while, Speidel-Röttmann came, and asked, "What is this? The dogs are whining in the other room: where is Adam?"

"Gone."

"Where?"

"I cannot tell. He will soon be back."

"So! I know where he goes. Tell my wife nothing! Tell your father nothing! Has he been gone long?"

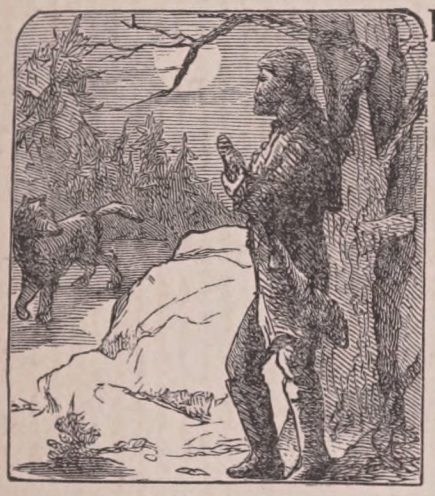
"Scarcely ten minutes."

"Go in, and bring me my hat! Go quietly, so that they will not notice you. Take care that the dogs do not come out — or no — yes, bring my hat! He is a fool: you are a very fine girl."

Toni moved away from the awkward figure of Speidel-Röttmann, and brought him his hat and stick. The old man charged her to say only that he would soon be back, and then started: he went very cautiously, putting his stick a long distance forward before he took a step.

CHAPTER X.

A FATHER SEEKING HIS SON.



WHEN Adam came out into the fresh air, it seemed to him that he had just awaked from sleep. "What has happened?" he said to himself, and then added, "If I will, nothing has happened." And now it seemed as though the hand he had lately given in pledge became suddenly cold, and he held it to his warm pipe-bowl. The way to the village could not be missed; but he was obliged to go slowly, for at the side of the road was a precipitous descent to the valley, and the snow was now falling so fast, that he could see but a few steps before him. He looked already like a wandering snow-man; but he knew every tree and every piece of rock on the way, and kept himself on the right path. When he reached the little elevation where the road begins to descend to the valley, he looked

back once, and saw the lights shining in the forest-mill: he felt himself drawn powerfully towards them. "She is a beautiful maiden, and a thousand have done like you, and are prosperous and happy: turn back!"

But, with these thoughts, he began the descent of the mountain, and the lights disappeared behind him. Now his heart was lighter; and in the snow he raised his clinched hand towards heaven, and swore, "I will never turn back! I would rather be poor all my life, and work for my daily bread, than to desert Martina and my child, my Joseph! I have not heard his voice for two years: he must have grown very large, and 'father' he will say — 'father!'"

Suddenly Adam stood quite still. "Father! father!" cried a child's voice in the woods. Once again, "Father!" quite distinctly. "No, you must be deceived," he thought: "how can that be? The wine must have bewildered you."

He lighted his pipe, which had gone out, and by the light of the match he could see all about him, in the snow, the footprints of a dog. "What is this? A dog must have lost his master, whom he has been seeking; but there is no step of a man to be seen. What ails you? Hasten on!"

Listen! Once more. This time, it is a man's voice that calls from the mountain, "Adam, Adam!" Are you again bewildered? or is the world bewitched to-night?

Adam grasped his heavy stick with great might, and cried, "Let them come, the whole race of witches, the whole hell, if it will! I fear nothing. Have I not been indeed, these long years, in a hell, because I have submitted like a miserable, weak fellow (God forgive me!), and thought my mother would yield at last? — as though a horseshoe could ever be boiled soft. Now I have let them play this farce with me, and have been betrothed. But I will never do it! — I will not, if the whole world comes. I will have my way, — my Martina and my Joseph! Only come, you accursed world of witches! What is that? It must be the dog whose footsteps I saw. Come here, sir! come here! He will not come: great heavens! It is the wolf we have heard about. He howls hoarsely! he is coming nearer!" For a minute, Adam's hair stood on end; then he exclaimed, "You shall have your desert, and again and again." The creature felt what kind of blows a man can give who is forced to his betrothal, and especially such a man as Adam Röttmann. The wolf became the scapegoat for the whole wicked world, whom Adam would gladly have had thus in his power. When the animal had sunk upon the ground, Adam did not trust him, — wolves are so sly! — but continued beating him unmercifully; and at last turned him over with the club, so that he lay upon his back. Then, as he gave no sign of

life, Adam said with satisfaction, "Yes, you have had your desert." Large drops of sweat ran from the man's face. His pipe had been lost, and he could find it nowhere: it had fallen from his mouth, and even the spark which had been shaken out had terrified the wolf. At length, he took the animal by the neck, and continued his journey, dragging the wolf thus after him. When he saw the lights of the village twinkling in the distance, he laughed, and said, "When I bring them the wolf I have beaten to death with my stick, how astonished they will all be! And what will my Joseph say? Ah, boy! you must have respect for your strong father. I will cut the wolf's heart from his body, and you must wear it, that you may also be strong like him, — perhaps even stronger."

Adam had not been bewildered when he had heard his name: his father had followed him, calling, "Adam!" Had Adam also heard aright when the child's voice called, "Father"?

The mysterious disappearance of father and son was not long kept a secret at the forest-mill. Röttmann's wife knew well where they had gone; and she raved over the folly of her husband, who had started forth after the obstinate boy. He always was so rash when he did not take her into counsel! Adam, too, received his share of abuse, which was not of a match-making nature: but the miller's wife was wise enough to add, that their

friend knew how to joke well; that she called her husband and son by the worst names, because she knew they deserved the best; and both women looked up in surprise when Toni added, "From Adam I heard nothing but love, wisdom, and kindness, as long as he sat with me in the other room." As at a signal, both women began to laugh: and Röttmann's wife caressed Toni, and told her she was discreet; and that was the way to gain power over men, who must obey; for they were good for nothing without women, and a wife made a husband. She would except only the miller, her cousin. He, however, took no notice of the exception that was made of him: he merely groaned to every thing that was said, until the groans became a cough, so violent that it seemed as if he would suffocate. He had risked a large stake: he had emulated Speidel Röttmann in drinking; and that is a venture no one has ever tried unpunished.

His wife was very careful of her husband, and helped him to bed up stairs. Then she came back, and said, "Fortunately he is asleep now. He ought to know that he cannot be a match for a Röttmann."

Flattered by this praise, her friend replied, "Take care that he soon makes his will, with this cough!"

"People say, — God forgive me that I repeat it, and to you too! — but people say," the miller's

wife complained, "that you are a wicked woman. I would like to see another who would be so interested in a forsaken widow!"

She regarded herself as such already, and rubbed her eyes, and looked quite worthy of pity; but, as this was to no purpose, she folded her hands, and looked beseechingly at the other woman, as she continued, "And you will remember me, and will not let your ungrateful son have every thing."

Röttmann's wife laughed, and said she had been quite misunderstood. It was true, she wished Adam no good; but she was not such a fool as to leave her goods and gold to a stranger. Then she demanded that somebody should be sent after her husband and son. The head servant was called; but he said he could not go himself, nor would any of the other men go, in such weather. If Röttmann had gone out, he could take care of himself, and would be back in good time. Next she desired that the sleigh should be brought to take her home. Once there again, she would show Adam and his father who was master! But no one would drive her; and the miller's wife with her most persuasive words, and Toni with real earnestness, begged her to stay all night. In the morning, the weather might be better, the daughter urged; and Adam had promised to be back when the tree was lighted. She added that the children of the miller's servants had been waiting a long time for the

lighting of the tree and for the presents. The two women received with favor the proposition to light it now; and Röttmann's wife praised Toni for her kindness, and gave the latter to understand that she knew that Adam and his betrothed had arranged some pleasant surprise. The switches which were to be hung upon the tree, the wild woman took, drew them through her left hand, holding them in her right, and snapped them in the air, so that it whistled. This sound seemed to be music in her ears.

CHAPTER XI.

LEAVE THE CHURCH IN THE VILLAGE.

"WHEN I receive a visit, I am doubly well; and do you know why? In the first place I have a better appetite. Let one say what he will of the baseness of the human heart, the pleasure of entertaining a guest is a deep draught of all-diffusing human kindness."

"And secondly?" asked the young man.

"Secondly," replied the priest, "if I have a guest, I do not need to go out. The world has come to me. I make the whole journey with the traveller, and so have a right to remain in the house."

It was with an indescribable pleasure that the priest spoke these words to his brother-in-law as they sat at table. It was hardly noon; but it had already begun to grow dark. As the farmer was filled with respect for the priest, so was the latter filled with delight at the cheerful, hopeful, and at

the same time thoughtful spirit of the young man. There are still young men in the world: the misery of infirmity, of empty satiety, and of the loss of all attractiveness, does not move in a circle. There is another youth in the world, other than we were, infolding another future. Thus the priest thought as he listened with deep attention to what the young man said. This joy in the fresh, handsome face, but still more in the thoughts and disposition, of the young brother, whom he himself had once taught, was like a spiritual joy in the best thoughts. "And you have a firm grasp," said he, taking the well-formed hand of his brother-in-law. "But never marry any one who cannot sing: it were a shame that you should not sing together!"

The conversation wandered from one subject to another; and, in the course of it, the farmer said that many young men formed a false idea of the life of a landholder, and therefore they became so often reckless and worthless. He himself, as son of a high officer of justice, had formerly suffered much from the consequences of false expectations, until he had learned to find his happiness in hard work. He was now manager of the estate of a nobleman; but had given notice that he should leave, in order either to be an independent farmer, or to buy enough land for a peasant.

In the midst of the conversation, a sound of persons stamping snow from their feet was heard.

Three men were at the door, who soon came up stairs : they were the church-wardens.

"Edward, come into the other room," said the priest's wife ; and added, "This is my brother ; and these are Schilder-David, the wheelwright, and a peasant from Hartz."

"Welcome!" said Schilder-David, extending his hand. "But we beg you to remain, madam. What we have to say is good, if you and your brother are both here."

"Sit down," said the priest.

"Thank you ; it isn't necessary," answered Schilder-David, who seemed to be the chosen speaker. "In a few words, sir, there is a report in the village, — who brought it we do not know, — and our priest has a hundred times preached to our hearts, that, if we hear any thing of any one that we cannot believe, we should go directly to him and ask him. So, — no offence, — but is it true, sir, that you want to go away from us?"

"Yes."

There was perfect silence in the room for a while. Then David began again : "Now I believe it, sir. We had, before you came, a priest who hated us, and whom we hated. Can any thing be worse? How can love and kindness and holiness increase, when he who speaks the word and he who hears have nothing in common? We dread to have it so again. We know there are some in

the parish who have pained the kind heart of our priest: but, sir, the Lord was willing to spare Sodom if two good men could be found in it; and you, sir, will leave us and condemn us because two or three bad ones are among us?" Here he stopped; but, as the priest did not answer, he resumed: "We need not tell you, sir, how our hearts love you. If it is better for you somewhere else, we cannot help wishing you to go; but every one in the village, every man, every woman, every child, wherever and whenever he meets the priest, feels as though something good had been sent him, as though he couldn't pass by empty, and 'Good-morning' or 'Good-evening' isn't enough. So now, sir, we only wish it will be the same in the new place, and that our priest will see that we have a new one, — not like him; that we don't expect, — but a good one."

"Thank you, thank you!" said the priest. "I will do what I can."

"No, no," said the peasant from Hartz. "David hasn't said what we wanted to say. We think the priest ought not to leave us: he ought to stay here. He should, as we say in the proverb, 'leave the church in the village.'"

"I cannot recall my application for the other place if I would."

"Then we beg the priest to excuse us for troubling him," said the wheelwright, with a cer-

tain proud feeling that he had said something, and that not the worst thing. The men left the room. The priest's wife accompanied them down the stairs, and comforted them by saying that it was not decided yet, and that she did not urge the decision of her husband, which had cost him much pain. To-morrow would be a better time to speak to him; for to-day he was not feeling as well as usual: he had been called to the Röttmanns last night for nothing, and less than nothing.

"I hear," said David, "that they have all gone to the forest-mill to the betrothal. I did not believe that they would; but I believe every thing now. The betrothal, however, will do them no good: we shall not consent."

The wife came back to the room where her husband and brother were still sitting together. No one spoke. The evening-bells began to ring in the festival; and, in the hearts of the three who sat there, they sounded strangely indistinct. The wife at last said, "I shall be sorry when I cannot hear those bells. What have they rung back to our hearts!"

The priest sat quietly by the window; but after a while he said, as to himself, "The hardest is the determination to leave our old ways. Now that I have decided by myself and before others, it would not be well to turn back. Let a light be carried to my room. I will soon see you again, Edward." And, with these words, he went to his room.

CHAPTER XII.

WHERE IS JOSEPH?

"WHERE is Joseph?" asked David when he came home.

"He is not here."

"I sent him home when I went to the priest's."

"He did not come."

"He must have gone to Häspele's again: I will go for him," said Martina, and went out.

"Give him a good box on his ears for not minding better," David called after her.

Martina soon came back, and said, "Joseph is neither at Häspele's nor at the workshop."

"So no one knows where the naughty boy is? I will go for him myself."

Schilder-David went from house to house, and asked for Joseph; but no one knew any thing about the boy. Finally he came back; for he said to himself, "He must certainly be at home by this time."

"Where is Joseph?" asked Martina, as he

stepped into the little entrance-room that served as kitchen.

"He'll come soon," the grandfather answered; but he went himself through the whole house, looking everywhere. He called in the garret the name of Joseph, and was startled at the sound of his voice in the empty room. He threw back the door of every cupboard, behind which no human being could find room to put himself; and at last he went to the little fall in the brook behind the house, and opened the covered lime-pit, although it was frozen over, so that nobody could have fallen into it. As he was going back to the house, he met Häspele, who was bringing the new boots, to whom he confided that he had looked for Joseph everywhere, and that something must have happened to the child: he did not know what, but he was much troubled.

"Have you been at the bugler's for him? I heard the bugler playing, and Joseph must certainly be there. Take the boots, and I will find him."

The good Häspele went quickly down the village to the house of a stocking-maker, who was practising some new tunes on his horn. The music sounded very cheerful in the still evening, when one could not hear his own footsteps in the snow. Joseph had a good taste, Häspele thought, to prefer the bugler's to his own home. But Joseph was not

there; and, on his way back, the shoemaker told every one he met that he was looking for the boy: but no one had seen the child, who was nowhere to be found. Häspele returned with this sad message to David, who said, "Be quiet! Don't say any thing to the women; for they would cry, and make a great noise. Wait here a while. He has probably hidden himself: perhaps he is coming out when the three kings go round, and he fancies he does something fine. But I will make him fancy something else!"

With apparent easiness, David sat down, whistling, and striking the air with his hand, as in anticipation of the coming punishment.

"I will wait quietly," he said, and filled his pipe, and smoked; remarking, in the mean time, that Joseph was a sly rogue, and that he must suffer for causing so much anxiety. Finally, the grandfather took down his Bible, and began to read where he had left off the evening before: it was in the second book of Samuel, chap. xii., where King David mourns over the sick child.

This did not give the reader any peace: he left his seat, and went out again, listening. The bells were ringing in the festival. "Now the boy must come," he said; but no one came. Dissimulation could no longer be practised. David went to the right, Häspele to the left, from house to house. Nowhere was there any trace of Joseph; nobody

had seen him. Both came back. The three kings passed by, and the boy was not with them. The men could conceal their anxiety no longer.

"Martina, Joseph cannot be found," said the grandfather; and Martina uttered a wild cry of anguish, and said, "That is why he woke three times last night, and asked, 'Isn't it morning, yet?' Joseph, Joseph, Joseph! Where are you?" she called, going through the house, up the mountain, through the village, into the gardens, out into the fields.

"Oh! if he is lost, I shall die. I shall never hear the new year rung in again; and the tree that I bought for frames — let it be sawed into boards, and lay me on them." Thus David mourned to Martina; but she did not hear him, for she had long been gone. The neck-cloth about the old man's neck seemed too tight for him; he tore it off; his whole face was convulsed; and, do what he would to keep back his tears, they flowed fast. "Joseph is certainly in the church," he exclaimed suddenly, and hastened to it. It stood open; and preparations were going on there for the midnight service: the schoolmaster was moving about with a taper in his hand, placing many candles upon the table.

"Joseph, Joseph! are you here?" David cried, coming into the church. His voice sounded strangely loud; and the schoolmaster let drop the

light from his hand, as he answered, trembling, "There is nobody here but me. What is the matter?"

"You have permitted the children to call him 'Colt;' and you are also guilty if he is lost," cried David, and hurried away. The schoolmaster, at this accusation, found his mind in as much darkness as the church, where he recovered his wax taper only after much stumbling.

The whole village had collected by this time; and even the bugler came upon the street with his horn, which he quickly put under his cloak to keep it dry. "I will go up and down the village, and play," he said; "and then he will come."

"No," some one said: "old Röttmann's wife has stolen him. She will compel you, Martina, to make Adam free; for to-day, at noon, he was betrothed to the miller's daughter, Toni. A boy from the mill has been here, and told us all about it."

"I will not be foolish enough to believe that," cried Martina. "Joseph, Joseph, come! Your mother is calling you."

While all were standing together thus, a funny-looking little man, with long-pointed parcels hanging all about him, came up the valley. It was the hatter from the city, who was bringing some freshly-ironed, three-cornered hats to the village for the holiday.

"What has happened here?" asked the little man.

"We are looking for a child, Joseph, who is lost."

"How old is he?"

"Just six years."

"A large child with a great head, and light curling hair, met me."

"Yes, yes, that is he! For Heaven's sake, where is he?" And Martina rushed towards the man with such violence, that all his hats fell into the snow.

"Be calm: he isn't in my pocket! Below, in the woods, a boy suddenly met me. I said, 'What are you doing here alone, when it is so near night? Where are you going?'—'To meet my father,' he answered: 'he is coming this way; haven't you seen him?'—'How does your father look?'—'A very large man.'—'I have not seen him,' I said. 'Come home with me, child.'—'No, I shall go home with my father.' I took hold of the boy, and tried to force him to come with me; but he was very obstinate, and resisted: he finally slipped away from me, and sprang into the woods like a young deer; and I heard him calling far away, 'Father, father!'"

"That was Joseph; for God's sake, go after him!"

"We will all go, all!"

"Stop!" David stepped forward. "Stop! hatter, will you go?"

"I cannot. I can scarcely lift my feet; and, be-

sides, it would do no good, for it is already more than an hour ago that I saw the child. I stopped above in the farm-yard, and who knows where he is now? I can tell you just where I saw him: it was in the Otterswanger Forest, right by the brook, where the large beech stands: it is the only large tree; you all know it."

"Good! I will break off a branch, and he shall remember it," said Schilder-David, composing himself.

"No, do not beat him!" screamed Martina. She could not say that this was the place where Adam had first kissed her: perhaps, now, her child was lying there frozen — dead.

"It is dark: we can see nothing, and the snow is falling faster and faster; so, take torches! Let the alarm-bell be rung! — but we must get permission of the priest for that. Come to the priest's house!" called Häspele.

Martina was led home; and, when she saw the new boots on the table, she sobbed forth, "Oh! there are his boots: how glad he was about them! And your little feet are frozen, are cold, are dead!" The women who surrounded her sought to comfort her; and one was wise enough to say that freezing was a very easy death, — a person went to sleep and never woke.

"One goes to sleep on earth, and wakes in heaven. O God! my Joseph has prophesied! He was

too good, too wise; and he went to meet his father! No, I will not die. If you go to the church with another, then will my Joseph call from heaven, 'No!' and — 'Father, father!' he cried, and his father did not answer, did not know his voice. You shall know it by day and night. In your ears shall you hear called, your whole life long, 'In your own forest, your child was frozen; go out and search through it; it is of no use!' Your heart is wood, nothing but wood! And there stands the little horse with which my Joseph has so often played. Yes, you, too, look sad, you good little horse, so compassionate! and yet you are wood, and he is wood too: but he has no compassion; he has killed his child! Oh, how often your little master has held crumbs to your wooden mouth, and wanted you to eat! he was so good! O Joseph, Joseph!"

"It's well if he is frozen, for the wolf is in the neighborhood; and who knows if the beast hasn't torn him to pieces?" whispered one woman to another. The ear of sorrow, however, is wonderfully acute; for, in the midst of her lamentation, Martina heard the words, and she suddenly cried in a loud voice, "The wolf, the wolf!" Then, gnashing her teeth, she raised her clinched hands, and said, "I could take you and strangle you with these hands. O Lois, Lois! for Heaven's sake, why do you still sew? She still sews on the jacket when the child is dead!"

"I have heard nothing. No one has spoken to me. I have heard nothing. You have said nothing. I say three times, 'You have said nothing.' You know I have no superstition. Nothing in the world is more mischievous than superstition; but it is certainly true, — there is no mistake, — as long as anybody sews and spins for a person, he cannot die. There was once a king" — And, in the midst of the confusion, Lois related her own version of the story of Ulysses and Penelope, — how this lady had sewed and spun; and what she did in the daytime she took out in the night; and by this means she had saved the life of her husband, who had gone to America.

Lois feared that the others were not listening to her; so she did wisely, — she told her story uninterruptedly, and sewed at the same time, without raising her eyes. Wherever she sat down, she remained, without rising, till the time came for her to go home; and, whenever she began a story, she told it to the end; and, if the house had been on fire, who knows if she would have left her seat? The fire would have had to wait till Lois was ready.

While Martina was in the house, mourning with the women, the whole band of men had gone to the parsonage, and Häspele had become the leader. The children had wanted to go to find Joseph; but the mothers had held them back with tears, and the

fathers had shaken off the clinging ones, and had scolded them well. The grandfathers, who had crept out of their warm corners on the hearth, took the women and children home again.

It was as if an army went to meet an enemy. But who was the enemy?

There were some who thought it impossible to find a child in the woods in such a snow-storm: it was, they said, like looking for a needle in a haystack. Häspele cried, however, "Who does not wish to go can return; but we need no one to dissuade us:" and not one of the company turned back. Häspele went up, and requested the priest to have the alarm-bell rung. The latter was deeply moved at what he heard of Joseph: nevertheless, he said it would be useless to ring the bells; it would needlessly alarm the neighboring villages, and, in some future calamity, they might not be ready with their aid. "It is brave in you, and I rejoice that so many are going," he added.

"Not one young man in the village, who is not sick, remains behind," said Häspele.

"I must remain," replied the priest, smiling. "Röttmann's wife robbed me of last night, and at twelve o'clock to night I must go to church. But we will pray for you all who are out."

"I will take your place," said the young farmer. "Who is the leader?"

"We have none: will not you be, brother-in-law?"

Every one laughed because Häspele, who did not know Edward's name, called him brother-in-law in place of the priest. "My name is Brand," answered the farmer. "I know the road, for I have been over it to-day."

"The priest's brother-in-law is going with us," was soon announced to those in the street; and all were much pleased at this. Häspele was right. Except the sick and infirm, no man in the whole village was wanting: all stood there with torches, climbing-irons, ladders, axes, and long ropes.

"Is there any one here who can give a signal?" asked the farmer.

The stocking-maker immediately drew his horn from under his cloak; and the instrument did not look brighter in the light of the torches than the face of the man who had become such an important personage.

"Good! Do you remain with me. In my opinion, the best way is this: The signal-giver shall stay with me on the Reitersberg, where we will kindle a fire: then you shall all start, two by two, — no one alone. Whoever finds Joseph shall bring him to us on the Reitersberg, or, at least, bring us tidings of him. As long as he is not found, three long blasts shall be blown on the horn; but, as soon as he is found, three short ones shall be given, and these shall be continued till all have again assembled — But better still! I have my gun with me: are there not others in the village?"

"Yes, many!"

"Do you take them; and, when Joseph is found, we will each fire three times, one after another. If we did not do this, it might easily happen that some of you good people would be wandering about in the ice and snow long after the child is found."

"He is right! That is good! That is like our priest's brother-in-law!"

The young farmer smiled, and continued, "One thing more. We have beds and blankets; but isn't there a dog in the village that knows Joseph?"

"All know him, all love him. You know Joseph, don't you, Lightning?" Häspele asked of a large dog that stood by him.

The large yellow dog barked his answer.

"That is well," cried the farmer. "Let all the dogs go!"

"We will hang lanterns around their necks; and we will hang cow-bells and sleigh-bells about ourselves."

Every one became inventive; but, fortunately, each one had the same end in view.

"Now, give the signal once, so that all may know it," the farmer said; and the bugler blew with all his might. The sound had hardly died away, when Martina came running toward them, and cried, "Here are his clothes!"

"Let the dogs smell them," the leader commanded. Martina was almost overthrown by the dogs that were brought to her; and Häspele considerately took the garments from her hands.

"Call the dogs! Let us go for Joseph!" the farmer called. "Now, forward, march! Joseph is the watch-word!"

"Stop!" a loud voice called behind them. "What is going on here?"

"Adam! — you!" screamed Martina, and rushed towards him. "What have you there? Have you found our Joseph?"

"What? Joseph? This is the wolf that I killed with my stick!"

"That is the wolf that has torn our child in pieces!" Martina cried, staring in horror at the dead animal. Häspele was wise enough to tell Adam, in a few words, every thing that had taken place. The latter still held the wolf by the neck; but now he shook him powerfully, and then hurled him with immense force over the ditch into the field. "I do not tear your heart from your body!" he cried. "You have torn — and here I swear before all, whether the child is dead or not, my Martina is mine in life and death. God forgive me that I have been so long such a weak, irresolute, worthless fellow! I call you, men, all to witness. And may you strike me dead if I do not take Martina home, even though my father

and mother, and the whole world, shall oppose me!"

"Say nothing of that now!" Martina entreated, and hid her face on Adam's breast. For the first time, she could weep; and Adam laid his hand upon her head, while his chest heaved with strong emotion.

At a noiseless signal, the band of men, with their bells, torches, and dogs, moved on. Only Häspele, with a torch, remained with the unhappy parents; and he saw, when Adam looked up, large tears, which glistened in the torch-light, roll down the cheeks of the strong man. But Adam shook them off, as if in anger, and said finally, "Come, Martina, we will certainly find him. I cannot believe that he is dead. I heard him call in the forest: I could not think that it was a human voice; and it was my child's voice!"

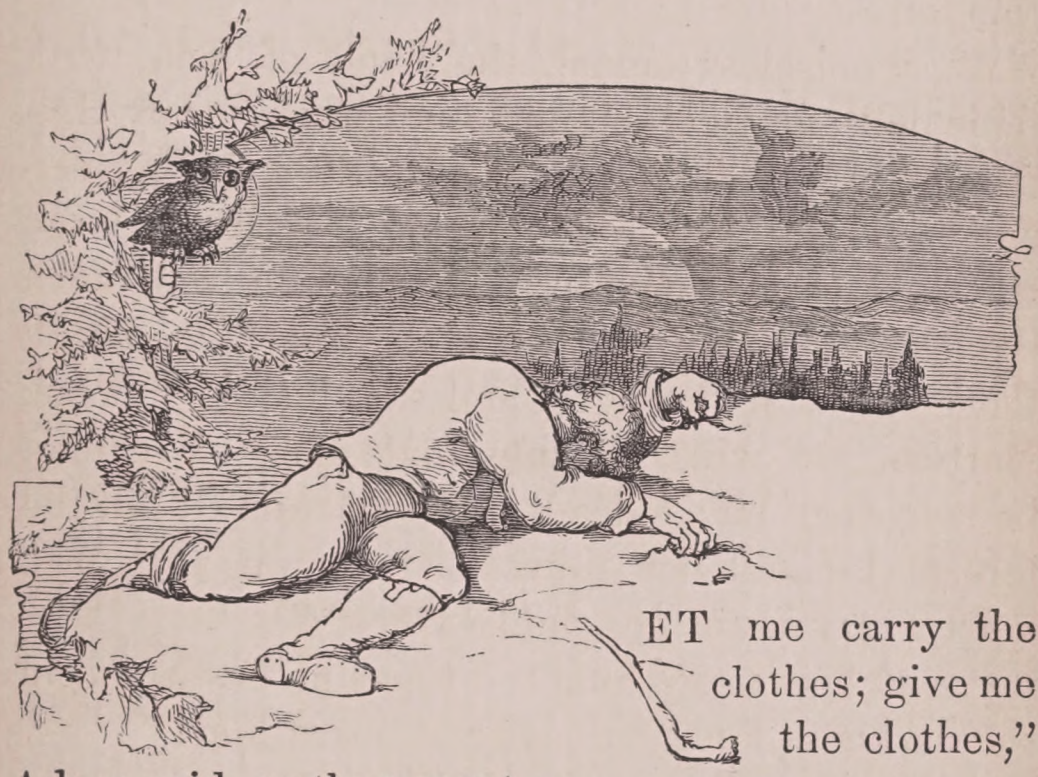
"And how many hundred times he has called in the darkness, and you have not heard him!"

"If he is still alive, he shall never speak again, and I not hear him."

"God grant it! Amen!" said Häspele to himself, as he went before them with the torch.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WILD ARMY.



"LET me carry the clothes; give me the clothes," Adam said, as they went on.

"No, I will not give them up: these are all I have left of him. And here are his new boots, which he never put on; and his little wooden horse, which I did not know I had taken."

"What! Does he like horses? Then he will like his father."

"Do not jest now. Think! you are speaking of the dead."

"Lost is not dead; and who knows if he has not come to some house, or somebody has not found him and taken him home?"

As a proof of gratitude for the consolation which Adam gave her, Martina laid the clothes upon his arm, saying, "There, only you must carry them." When they came to a weeping-willow, which, in its covering of snow, looked strangely weird in the torch-light, Martina continued, "There is the tree. When our Joseph was not yet three years old, I went there with him; and, because the leaves hung down, he said, 'Mother, the tree is raining leaves.' He has often talked so that we have forgotten whether we were on the earth or in heaven; and, at the same time, he has grown so strong, so remarkably strong, I have been obliged to use all my strength when I have wished to hold him. And, now, to die so! It is indeed frightful. Joseph, Joseph, my good Joseph, come back! Where are you? I am here. Your mother is here, and your father too! Come, Joseph, Joseph! Call, Adam! Can you not call with me?"

"Joseph, Joseph!" Adam cried in his loudest tones. "My child, come to me! Joseph, Joseph!"

He who before had trembled in whispering the name in secret, now called it through the forest. But presently he ceased, and said, "This is of no use, Martina. Be calm, or you will make yourself sick."

"If my Joseph is dead, I no longer wish to live. I have no one in the world but him."

"Ah! I did not know that. I thought I was something to you."

"Why will you quarrel with me now?" moaned Martina; and, for a long time, neither spoke. But Häspele was a good mediator: he came to Martina, and entreated her to drink some of the brandy he had so considerately taken with him for Joseph.

"No, no; I do not need it; and I will take nothing from my child!"

"Only a little," Adam urged as tenderly as his voice would permit. "Our boy cannot drink all this if we find him."

"What do you say? *If* we find him? You surely know something, and will not tell me. You know that he is dead."

"I know nothing; I know as little as you: but I beg you to drink a little."

"Oh! if Joseph only had it, it might bring him back to life! I do not need it. Do not ask me to take it!"

But Adam persisted until Martina drank. That was a good opportunity for him to take her hand; and they went on again together.

She spoke now in a low voice, and told how secret Joseph always was; how he whispered in her ear what he could as well say before every one: but he liked best to do so; it was his peculiar way.

And he must certainly have had something to say to his father alone; then Adam could have felt how it thrilled one to hear Joseph's voice in his ear. "His warm breath is now gone!" she concluded, and wrung her hands. Suddenly she grasped Adam's arm, and cried, "O God! there is the rock where I should have died, had not Lois found me. If we had died together there, before you came into the world, it would have been better. Where are you now? Perhaps you are lying but a few feet from us, and we do not see you, and you do not hear us. I will go from hill to hill, to the top of every rock, into every valley. Oh! why cannot I be near you and call to you? Joseph, Joseph, Joseph! I think I see him now on that rock. He is standing as if ready to leap down. He is still unhurt. How pretty he looks as he laughs at the thought of the leap! But he falls! I see him no more. Oh, how quickly! And there below lies my child, bruised and dead. Can it be? What have you done, poor boy? You are not guilty!"

"Leave these foolish fancies; they are of no use," Adam remonstrated. But Martina hissed between her teeth, "You are most guilty! A father can deny his child, can pass him by as though he were not in the world; but a mother never can. You are the most guilty; you!"

"Why do you reproach me with that now?"

"I do not reproach you. Why do you quarrel with me?"

"I do not quarrel with you; I do not contradict you: only be quiet a little while, and to-day all our sorrow shall end."

"How can you speak of sorrow?"

"I will say nothing more, — only be quiet a moment. Hold on to me; so, so!"

"No, no; I cannot," Martina abruptly exclaimed, after she had leaned a short time on him; "I cannot. O dear God! do any thing with me; only do not let my Joseph suffer. He is innocent; I alone am guilty, — I and" — She pointed to Adam, and moved away a few steps, as though she could not bear to have him near her. Her eyes were dry now; but she sobbed bitterly from time to time.

By this time the troop of men had separated, and were now penetrating the forest. Men with torches, with lanterns, with loud shouts and cries, with the cracking of whips and the tinkling of bells, were hurrying to and fro; dogs, with lanterns hanging from their necks, ran barking up the mountain, and down the ravines. It was well that perfect order was kept, for no one knew another; each seemed only a wandering mass of snow: and, in the light of the torches, the mountains and rocks seemed to be looking in astonishment at the men who came hither, and called and cried for a lost child.

"See how all the village loves him!" Martina

said to Adam; and then she told him about Joseph's waking in the night, and about his asking in the morning which way his father would come; and she reproached herself for having obeyed Lois, and sent the boy from the house: she ought to have known that something terrible would happen to-day. Adam was entirely helpless; he knew not what to say; and when he thought of the forest-mill and all who were expecting him there, and of the injustice he had been induced to commit, it seemed doubly terrible to him.

Suddenly a shout of joy burst upon their ears.

"What is it? What is it? Thank Heaven, they have found him! When? where?" In a moment, the smith met them, and, holding up something to them, cried, "Here is his cap! now we shall soon find him!"

Martina seized the dripping cap, and wept hot tears upon it. "Oh! now he is without a cap, and the snow is falling on his head." She shaded her eyes with her hand, and gazed at the smith, who had forgotten to wash his face when he started, on which the snow had drawn strange figures, while his red beard was full of snow.

"Keep in the road, so that we can find you instantly," the smith said; and, as he turned to go, he added, "We shall serve you so well to-night, that we shall be entitled to many drinks at your wedding."

It was like the wild army of the old legend that now roamed the forest; and one man was there who saw it in person. Speidel-Röttmann, while seeking his son, had taken a false step, and had been precipitated into the ravine. The fall had the effect of making him sober, but did not injure him. He walked a long distance over the frozen brook; and the trees and rocks looked down upon him like frightful giants, and shook the snow upon him as he went. He did not know whether he was going up or down the stream, and he looked for a stone to break the firm covering of the water; but he could free none from the hold of the ice: the whole country was in chains, and could give him no help. "Ah!" he exclaimed presently, "here is a clearing; here is a mountain-path." He began the ascent, climbing on his hands and knees, often sliding back, almost buried in the snow; but a Röttmann's strength was not to be baffled by these obstacles, and he reached the top at last. As he extended his hand for the last time, he felt something on the ground: he took it up, and found it was a pipe. He looked at it carefully. "This is Adam's!" he cried: "he must have gone by this place. But which way? right or left?" The footprints were effaced; and he went first in one direction, then in the other, as if led astray by an evil spirit. "What is that?" he suddenly exclaimed; for there came sounds as of horns blowing, whips

cracking, dogs barking. "What is it? Gracious heavens, it is the wild army! It is the rider on the white horse, with his furious troop, that crack their whips, and scream and yell! And I hear the voices of children crying. They say, when the wild army comes, whoever looks up shall have his head taken off and turned around." All the terrors of hell took possession of Speidel-Röttmann. He had often boasted that all the stories of witches, ghosts, and devils, were lies; but now every hair of his head stood on end, and gave proof that the former generation was no wiser than ours, but believed every thing. "Forgive me," he cried, "that I have not believed: I will." He sprang from the path into the forest, and threw himself down, with his face upon the ground, so that the wild army would pass by him, and not strangle him. So he lay, hearing it rage about him. He thrust his hand into the snowy mass, and held to it firmly. It is well that something is always firm in the world. "Hold fast, hold fast! or you will be lifted in the air and placed upon a tree, — who knows where? — and you will have your face turned round; and, in that condition, you will have to run about all your life." Now it seemed as though some one mockingly cried, "Isn't this your forest? But you yourself, together with all your forest-keepers and wood-cutters, cannot prevent the wild army from running through it. Do you hear a child's voice? Do you know it?"

Speidel-Röttman was at a loss what to do. His breath melted the snow in which his face was lying; and, in the view of death, he called, "Joseph!" as if that word could release him. "I swear it!" he cried again. The thought seemed to penetrate his heart, that a child was living on the earth to whom he had done a great wrong, and who was moaning and weeping high above him in the air. He would call back his son, and his son would call back his own. It was like a chain, he thought, which binds one to another, and ever farther, and —

"I consent; let me go free: you shall have your child." With these words, he dared to raise himself a little: the tumult, the cries and shouts, sounded farther away. "Who are you? who are you?" suddenly cried a man, who seized him, not like a human being, — no, like a spirit, — like a wild animal with claws.

"I am a miserable sinner; I am Christopher Röttmann. Let me be. Be merciful!"

"Ah! I have you at last!" the man cried, kneeling down upon him. "You must die! You have disowned, killed my grandchild, — thrown us all in misery."

"Who? What? You are" —

"Yes. You shall know who beats out your brains with this axe! I am Schilder-David. Yes, you accursed Goliath, I have you in my power, and you must die!"

Röttmann's strength returned to him. In an instant he cried, "Oho, oho! I have nothing to fear!" and his hand quickly followed his thought. He released his arm, and drew out his long knife, that he always wore; then he exclaimed, "Let me alone, David, let me alone, or I will stab you!"

"Your deeds of violence shall have an end!" cried David; and, with all his force, he tore the knife from Röttmann's hand. But the latter seized this opportunity to spring upright; and now David lay in his power on the ground. "Do you see?" he said triumphantly: "now *I* can kill *you!*"

"Do it! Destroy my whole family! You have killed my Joseph: kill me too!"

"Stand up; I will not hurt you!" Röttmann answered. "I do not know whether I am insane, or you, or the entire world. Why did you come here? What is going on in the woods?"

David began to relate what had happened; but, in the midst of the story, he broke forth, "It is not right for me to speak to you. You and your son both deserve death. I will not make peace with you: one of us must remain in this place. Strike me down! I will willingly go from this sinful world. I have nothing left in it."

Saying these words, David threw himself upon Speidel-Röttmann, who held him by the arms as firmly as if he were in a vice.

"I pity you!" said Röttmann.

"I will not have your pity. You are not worthy to speak to an honest man. You infernal rascal! carry your head high as you please; the gates of hell are broad and high enough to let you enter!"

"Insult me as you will; I am stronger than you. But listen to what I say. You see no man can compel me, — no man in the world can compel me — But I have something to say to you. I need not keep my promise, — no mortal heard it; and with the devil, and the wild army that people see, it is only superstition; and if I will not, nobody can make me. But hear what I say. No one was here; and you need not know why or what or where or to whom I promised. This is my forest, and here I am master; and if I find you here in the dark night, with an axe, I can bind you — can kill you if you try to escape — as I please. But all that is not what I have to say. I only wish to show you that nobody can compel me. But I will do it, and so it shall be; and here's my hand upon it. If the child is found, living or dead, you have my hand upon it; I will not oppose it."

"What?"

"Adam has my consent. And, in fact, I never was strongly opposed to it; but I was obliged to submit to my wife. I have been wandering in the forest, — I do not know how long, — and below

there, when it seemed to me that the rocks would fall down upon me, I thought I heard a child's voice, calling, 'Father, father!' and now I know who it was. But I cannot tell you how that voice pierced my heart; and I promised myself, that, if it could be, Adam should marry Martina. I give you my word."

"When the cow is gone, you make a stall for it. It is too late! There is no more happiness or blessing in the world. If you had known the child! He was an angel from heaven. Ah, good God! now he is dead, and no one knows where. There was once a time when I thought I could not go before the eyes of men, on account of him; and now I would go out of the world because the child is no more. I was indeed unworthy to have such a grandson; and you are more so. I will make no peace! No! One or the other of us must die! Strike me down! It is right; for then I can go out of the world with my Joseph."

In his anguish, David threw himself a second time upon Speidel-Röttmann, who again held him so that he could not stir. And, in fact, a miracle must have taken place in Röttmann; for he succeeded in calming David, so that they finally went together to look for Joseph.

"Joseph, your grandfather calls!" cried David.

"Joseph, your grandfather calls!" cried Speidel-Röttmann. David looked around as if to assure

himself that Röttmann really called so. The turner was the only man, who, in spite of the farmer's command, had gone forth alone: now he had found a companion, and such a one!

The horn sounded on the mountain; the torches and the lanterns moved here and there; the dogs barked, and ran up and down; the bells tinkled; and the two grandfathers went together, as though they had followed the same path from their youth. Finally a light was seen in the distance; and they directed their steps toward it.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOIS'S STORY.

THE Schilder-David's house, in the mean time, seemed no longer like a small one that belonged to a small family. Everybody went in and out; and many left open the door, which David's wife shut every time, without speaking: neither did any one stop to shake the snow from his feet; and the woman again and again rolled up the mat that lay on the floor, and shook it before the door.

Lois drew the cricket on which her feet rested near to her, in order that the other women who were sitting around the table should not share it; for she was not accustomed to sit in a damp room, particularly in such a watch-house as the Schilder-David's had become.

The mistress of the house threw more and more fuel into the stove, till the heat was intense; but

Lois understood how to keep a large audience, herself in particular, awake.

While the storm raged without, and the men wandered in the night among the rocks and ravines, and the whole village was in commotion, two things remained unmoved, and kept perfect time: these were the clock on the church-tower, and Lois before her cushion.

Martina had gone with the men; but there were still many women in the house. They complained that their husbands should put their own lives in danger in order to save a single child; when, in doing so, they might leave their own children in sorrow and poverty. But Lois began, while waxing her thread, "Yes, it is dreadful to be lost in the woods. I know about it: for it happened to me once in my life; and once is enough. For Heaven's sake, never let yourself be persuaded to go through the woods a nearer way, unless you know it! The nearest way is the devil's way: am I not right? Isn't there always a short road to the devil? When I think of it, it seems as if it were but yesterday; and who knows if poor Joseph hasn't gone the same way? The hatter met him by the large beech-tree; and I went by that. God forbid that he has gone where I went! It was the Sunday after St. John's Day, — no, it was Monday, — never mind, it was a holiday, Peter and Paul's, I think: we do not celebrate it; but the Catholics

do. It was a beautiful, clear day, and I was going away. I had nothing with me but a short velvet cloak, wrapped in a cloth, for the daughter of the peasant who lives among the elder-bushes at Wengern. You remember her? She is a widow now. But they say she is going to marry a young man from Newstädtle; for she has been there two Sundays in succession, and he has come home with her. She is very foolish, I think, to marry a young man. Then she was not married to her first husband, who was the miller's nephew, — the old miller, I mean. So I started, and went first down the valley. It was a very fine year: we haven't had one like it for a long time, — rain and sunshine just as we needed it. When I came to the forest, I met the constable's children, — the boy and girl: the boy was afterward a soldier, and was shot. The girl is in Alsace; and they say she is well married. They had come here to bring their two goats, which they kept in that part of the forest where the hazel-trees are. So I asked the children — I don't know why — if there wasn't some nearer way to Wengern. 'Oh, yes!' they said, 'I ought not to go by the broad path: I ought to turn into the woods at the left, by the juniper-trees.' I wanted one of them to go with me until I saw my way clear; for I had a presentiment: but the children were so stupid, they would neither go together nor alone. So I went on by myself; and, when I came to the

place where the inn now stands, — then it was far in the forest, — I called to the children to know if I was right; and they cried, 'Yes!' — at least I thought I heard them. So I went on and on; and I found it very cool among the trees. I rejoiced that I was in the forest, where it seemed like early morning, although it was nearly ten o'clock; for I knew it must be very hot in the village. When a person has to sit still a good deal, it does her so much good to take a long walk! and then I was young, and could run and leap like a young colt. Around the beech-tree, there were so many strawberries! but I did not stop. I ate a few, and then hurried on. I walked and walked, I do not know how far, and could not see any end to the path, which first went up the mountain, and then down. 'What is this? Is it a labyrinth?' I said to myself; for they say in a proverb, that any one who is lost, is in a labyrinth, and a labyrinth never leads one to mortals. I did not know it then; but I learned it, and I have paid dear for knowing it. 'Ah!' I thought, 'the time seems longer to you than it is; and every road is long when one stops often;' so, although I was very tired, I did not sit down. I heard a rustling in the trees above me, and presently a withered branch fell to the ground. I looked up, and there was a little squirrel clinging to the trunk of a tree, and gazing at me with his eyes wide open. I watched him as he ran up the

branches, and then I saw there were two playing 'catch' together. Ah, how fast they went! now here, now there. I must say I take great pleasure in animals, and I have to thank my mother for that. A hundred times she has said to us, 'Children, notice every thing, wherever you may be, for it costs nothing; and you do not know how much good it will do you to think about every thing you see.' But I knew nobody should ever be stopped long on the road by any thing; that is what makes us lose the way. So I went on again, and soon came to a young fir-wood, which was so thick, that it was quite dark in it, but refreshingly cool. Something was lying there. What was it? A herdsman asleep. I screamed with fright; and he awoke, and stared at me with his great eyes, as if he would say, 'You stupid creature, to wake me from my noon nap!' I ran as fast as I could, for I thought the herdsman was coming after me; and I felt that he would take me to one of the high peaks, and throw me down the mountain: so, whenever a dry branch fell from a tree, I trembled in every limb. Thank Heaven! the forest was at an end at last, I thought, as I came out upon a meadow, which was perfectly red with butterflies. I never saw so many in my life. I stood still, I was so glad to see them and the open meadow! A hawk flew screaming far above me in the sky, and I watched the bird as he went. It is certainly beautiful to see them

swim so in the air. 'But, away!' I said to myself, 'you must not delay.'

"After I had crossed the meadow, I came to a little footpath; and then I felt sure I must be near some dwelling. Here I found a bone button, which I put in my pocket; and it was well that I did so, for I had entirely forgotten that I had a bit of bread with me. This tasted so good! I never enjoyed a wedding-feast more; for in the wild woods you forget that men can sow and reap, can thresh and grind and bake. The path was so narrow, that I was obliged to push the branches aside in order to pass between them; and on each side there was a steep descent, like a roof. 'Oh, dear!' I thought, 'if some wicked man should come and rob me, and throw me down there, nobody would ever find me!' If he had come, I should have said, 'Take every thing I have. Here is my brass thimble and fifteen kreutzers. You may have them all, only let me go; and I swear to you I will never betray you.' Now should I need to keep such an oath? I think, for the sake of other people, that I should have told what had happened to me, that they might not be robbed in the same way. In my terror I began to sing; and, rack my brains as I would, I could think of no hymn, except, 'The grave is deep and still,' which wasn't very cheerful: so I sang light, frivolous songs; but still my heart beat fast in fear. At last I was over, and there was a

large, beautiful, level meadow again; but it was warm, excessively warm: my cheeks were burning, and I was as if just pulled from the water. There was a loud buzzing here, as of ten thousand bees. 'Oh! if I should step into a wasp's nest,' I cried, 'and the wasps should fly out on me, and make me intoxicated!' For my mother has told me that it is so, — one becomes intoxicated, and nothing helps anybody, but springing into the water; and here there was no water to be seen. Oh, how I longed for some! I was so thirsty!

"But what did I come to next? The road stopped finally; and there was a steep descent to some enormous rocks heaped together in the wildest way. 'Have I come to those rocks in Rockenthal, where no human being has ever set foot?' I asked myself. But, no: I could not have gone so far. I cried, 'Dear God, where am I?' and I shuddered to hear the echoes repeat, 'Where am I, where am I, where am I!' It was said at least seven times; and it seemed as though some one prolonged the sound till it reached the skies. It came from the rocks and the cracks, and made real music, as though somebody sang the words who had a longer breath than man's. I called the names of all I loved, and of all who loved me. I called and called: I loved every one. When one is in danger of death, all strife ceases. I called again and again; but nobody

heard me, — not one human soul. It was of no use: so I began to look about me, and I discovered another path that went through the woods. I followed that until it came to the side of a mountain; and then I turned to one side, and found myself at the edge of a steep precipice. I sprang back as far as I could; but I was dizzy: and it seemed to me that the precipice was pulling and dragging me down. I sat down, and thanked God that I was still on solid ground. A gold-hammer was sitting on a tree near me, and singing; but, as soon as I looked at him, he flew away to the mountain opposite. Gold-hammers always make a cat's back when they fly: they fly higher than the place where they alight, and then fall suddenly down. 'Oh, a bird is happy! There is no mountain and no valley for him. If I could only fly!' I cried.

"As soon as I was able, I turned in the other direction, — to the right. Here was a valley, deep and hollow, like a caldron. 'Oh Heavens! have I come to the Court of Death?' I cried. I thought I saw in the distance an elder-bush; and that is found only where men are or have been. Yes, the elder-bush and the swallows in the air were signs that men lived near. But I could see no house; and there was such a strange light on every thing! — as if the sun were eclipsed. It was neither light nor dark, and the trees and the mountains seemed trembling with fear. Alas! I must

have been at the Court of Death. Hundreds of years ago a rich peasant lived here, — so rich and so ungodly! And he and his wife and children used to bathe in milk every day, but would never give a drop to a poor person. They were worse than Röttmann's wife. At last our Lord punished them; for one Sunday, as they were playing ball with cheeses, in the meadow, the earth opened, and swallowed the whole household, man and beast. Some time they will all wake again, and will appear only for a single hour. It is not right to tell children such stories; for it makes them superstitious. I was not superstitious, however; but, although it was day, such black clouds were in the sky, that my hair stood on end. What I dreaded most was not the human beings who would come out of the ground, but the dogs that would immediately begin to bark and howl. That would have been frightful. 'All this isn't true!' I cried, and that gave me new courage. Once, I thought it would be wisest to turn back, and not go to Wengern that day; but the way home was so long! and I knew as little about it as of the way before me. Beside, I should be ashamed, I thought, to tell the people in the village that I had lost my way. So, I said to myself, 'Go on, and, if you do not come to Wengern, you will come to some place: only don't have any superstition; for it is still broad day, and to-night

is full moon. You can go home when you are rested, or you can stay in Wengern all night: nobody will be waiting for you.'

"This last thought made me feel very sad, — that I was alone in the world, that nobody would inquire about me, and that nobody would care much if I were lost. I must say, I almost cried then; but in a minute I thought that there were many who would ask about me, and how frightened they would be, and how pleased at all that I could tell them. 'Yes,' I said; 'but isn't it almost over? I have enough, quite enough, to tell already.' I was tired, — oh, so tired! But that was nothing: I had to keep on.

"By and by I heard a boy singing on the mountain. I did not certainly feel like singing; but I did, and loud too. When I was young, I could call louder than any one: people could hear me an hour after I had passed them on the road."

Here Lois put her hands to her cheeks, and uttered one of those shrill cries which are like sharp mountain-summits, that descend in broken slopes to the valley. She could call wonderfully loud for her years.

Schilder-David's wife, who had not heard a word of the whole story, sprang from her seat by the stove, and asked, "For Heaven's sake, what is it?" The other women had much trouble in pacifying her, and explaining why Lois had called so

loud. At length she sat down again, murmuring "I am rested. If I could only lend my feet to Martina!" The other women urged Lois to continue. She waxed a fresh piece of thread, and began slowly to sew the collar to the jacket. It had been ready for this some time; but she did not wish to finish it, because it was surely true that a mortal could not die as long as any one was sewing for him. No one wanted to sleep till the men had returned, and the midnight service was over; so they all were doubly glad to hear the story.

After Lois had unobservedly taken a pinch of snuff, she resumed: —

"I called, and the boy answered me. I cried, 'Where does this road lead?' But he only called in the same way again in reply. 'To the devil with your shouting!' I said, and then I was frightened at the words; but I could not take them back. I knew now that there must be another path through these woods; but I was sure it must be a wet one, for the ground never could dry under those thick trees. 'There are springs,' I said. 'Oh, if I could only drink at them!' But, when I came there, all I gained was wet feet. I walked at the edge of the path, and there it was soft as a bed. The moss was so thick, that I know nobody had ever taken a handful of it since the creation of the world. At length I came to dry ground again, and found myself going down the mountain; but I

could no longer see the path, for the pine-needles do not let you see where any one has passed. My shoes were as slippery as glass; and I tore my hands on a thorn, so that they bled. But I did not mind that, when I saw a little piece of brick, which I took up, to be sure of what it was; and then I knew that some human being must have been here, for brick does not grow. The most beautiful diamond would not have given me more delight than that bit of brick. I went on now quite peacefully, and wasn't at all frightened when I saw a snake coiled up and lying in the sunshine. I threw my piece of brick at him, and he hurried away. Oh, how many strawberries there were! Nobody gathered them, because nobody came that way, unless he was lost; and I — foolish thing! — did not dare to take a few and quench my thirst, for I thought the snake must have poisoned them all. I saw what I thought must be a channel for sliding trees from the mountain opposite. I thought I heard a brook flowing. 'This is certainly our brook,' I said; 'or is it only the rustling of the leaves above me?' When one is lost, he hears nothing aright. But I knew I must go down into the valley, be it what it might; so I took off my petticoat, and held my bundle in it. This bundle had given me much trouble; for when we are going up and down hill, with any thing under our arm, even if it is not heavy, it is

very tiresome; for it keeps our arm fast-bound to our side. Now I heard a wagon, I thought, in the valley; and I fancied there must be a good road there to let a wagon roll so smoothly: then the wheels seemed to turn a corner, and then the sound was lost. Alas! I had been deceived again. It was only the murmuring of the trees. 'I will listen to nothing, I will help myself,' I cried, and tried to run down; but it was so steep here, and the ground so hard, that I could not find a foothold; and I was tearing a pair of shoes for which I had paid two florins, — twice as much as I earned making the cloak. 'But what of that,' I thought, 'if I only escape with no bone broken?' I fell only once. We never ought to hold by any thing that we do not first examine. Broom is an excellent support; for that is firm in the ground. I took hold of the root of a tree, and the root remained in my hand while I rolled down several yards. I shut my eyes, and thought I was dead; but I stopped finally on a rock, which was covered with ants. I got away as fast as I could, and went into the thicket near the channel. I kept that in sight all the time, and jumped from one tree to another; or, rather, I tried to jump, but I could not. I was like the sparrows when they flap their wings, and fall through the air. I laugh when I think of it; but I did not feel like laughing then. I tried to comfort myself by thinking I

should have a story that would last my whole life long; and I said, 'No, no; go on! You will not die. Go on!' So I caught one branch of a tree, and then another; and once I slipped: but I did not fall again. The stones rolled under me, hopped high in the air, and I thought I could hear them plash in water down below. I knew, if I fell, I should fall like them; so I began to creep on my hands and knees again, and still kept on that side of the thicket where I could put my feet nearer the channel. After a long, long time, I was down. But, stop! — another step, and I should have stepped into death! There was a bank as high as a house, smooth as if cut away with a knife. There I stood, holding to the top of a fir-tree that was in the valley; but I could see no path. I stepped back a little way, and leaned against a tree; and now I could see where I was. There was water flowing. God be thanked and praised! There was the valley; and, once there, I should be at home again. How cheerful and friendly and true the water seemed! It half quenched my thirst, just to see and hear it. I thought I had done the hardest piece of work in my life when I had at last clambered down the side-path into the valley; and, when there, it seemed to me I stood upright for the first time. The perspiration was running off me, drop by drop. I sat down on a log that lay there, right by the large

beech-tree, where the hatter found Joseph. Oh, how warm I was! A horse that has been galloping seven hours could not be more heated. I would have torn off my clothes, but I knew it was cool in the valley. The sun was going down behind the mountains now; and, when I had started, it was long before noon.

"I saw some swallows flying by, and, oh, how glad that made me! I heard a cock crow; and no nightingale ever sings as sweetly as a cock to any one who is lost. I knew I was again in the world. I heard a hen cackle; and, 'when an egg is laid, some woman is made glad,' I thought. I heard a dog bark; and, 'wherever a dog barks, some man is near. I am again in the world!' I cried. Soon I heard the rushing of a mill. Where was I?

"While I was lost, I did not once give way to my feelings; but now, when I remembered in how much danger I had been, I cried till I thought I should never stop. I could not keep my tears back. Fortunately, a wood-cutter passed by, and I asked him where I was. He said I was close by the Röttmann Farm; but he did not stop. I called after him, 'What o'clock is it?'—'Past five.' So I had been wandering about seven whole hours, although I could not believe it. Seven hours! If I were superstitious, I might have thought that I had been led by the evil spirit that always leads

one astray just seven hours. I went up the brook; for I knew that was the way to the forest-mill, and by and by I came to the path that leads to it. I turned into this; but I had gone but a few steps, when I found that I had left the cloak which had given me so much trouble, and which I had guarded so carefully. 'Great Heaven!' I thought, 'perhaps the wood-cutter has stolen it, and I shall have to pay for the velvet, without any compensation.' I ran back. Men are good and honest enough when they don't know where any thing is. My parcel had slipped behind the log, and there it lay.

"The miller's wife was a good woman: her daughter Toni is like her. She gave me dry clothes, and was as careful of me as if I had been her sister. But, for three days, I felt as though I had been beaten all over; and when I came home — ah! when one has been lost, she believes there is no longer any home, — a place where she will find her own bed and looking-glass and table and bureau and singing-book. Oh, what good friends these are! and how we love them, and want to thank them for not running away, but waiting till we come! And do you know what is the worst part of being lost? It is to have people laugh when you tell them about it. But I wish no one to suffer as I did, not even Röttmann's wife. And that was a beautiful summer day, the Sunday

after St. John's Day, — no, not Sunday; it was Monday, Peter and Paul's Day.

"Oh, how must it be in the snow to-night! One could do nothing but lie down and die. Oh! I see the child before me, lying in the snow, or in some gap of the rocks! He beats his hands. His feet are stiff, so that he cannot walk. He cries 'Mother!' and listens, and thinks somebody is coming; but nobody answers except the raven on the tree. A hare runs by over the snow, and is frightened at the child, who looks after him, and forgets his suffering for a moment. 'Mother, mother!' he calls; and it is well that he will soon go to sleep, never to wake again. Oh! I am the most unhappy person, to see all this! But I must see it! It has always been so with our family, and my mother has often been called a witch. Think what happened to the poor child who lies buried at Wengern! He was found in the woods, on the third day after he was lost, quite covered with snow, which was melted only around his heart. All who saw him cried as if their hearts would break; and his mother became really insane on account of it. The priest wrote a beautiful verse for his tombstone. I used to know it by heart; but I have forgotten it. And what happened to the hatter, who was carrying some hats to Kmeslingen, one New Year's Day? He came to the same rocky precipice where I was when I was lost, and from

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there he came to the valley; but there was such a fog, that he could not see his hand before him. He ran at least seven times around the valley, and could not find the village. He heard sounds; but, when he was on one side, they seemed to come from the other. Finally, he heard some geese; and he followed their cries, and came straight to the village at last. But how he looked! — as if he had just come out of the ground. One thing I forgot to tell you, — the miller" —

Here Lois was interrupted by a loud cry before the house.

CHAPTER XV.

A CHILD SEEKING HIS FATHER.

LOIS had been mistress of David's house from morning till night; so, of course, she had banished Joseph whenever she pleased. In her presence, no one spoke of this; but, among themselves, all the women blamed her for it.

The news that the priest was to leave the village was told first to her; and, at this time, she showed that she had not been called "the councilman of the village" in vain. She immediately sent

the wardens to the priest to dissuade him from his purpose.

A boy from the forest-mill had been buying wine at the inn, and sugar and spices at the grocer's. Of course, this could not be kept secret in the village; and the report of it soon found its way to David's house, where Lois was, who must always have the freshest news. All took a certain pride in being the first to tell her any fact, and seemed to consider it a duty to give her information upon all subjects: sometimes, in fact, they gave it to her in anticipation. Now, there was a real pleasure in mixing the root-wine for the betrothal of Adam and Toni; and Lois added many spices to it, very different from those bought at the grocer's. She wished that the words she spoke might poison it, that all who drank of it might die. But she hesitated for whose death to wish most, — that of Röttmann's wife, or that of the miller, who would sell to such a mockery his only child, in order to save her dowry.

Martina had been very sorry to send Joseph from the house; but she knew that he ought not to hear the words that would be spoken: and, although she had not united with Lois in her curses, she had wept and lamented. She had sent Joseph a second time to Häspele; but the child was tired of hearing of a dog he was never to possess, and accordingly he went through the village,

to the meadow. On his way, a woman who met him said compassionately, "You poor child! This is a sad day for you!" He thought she meant that he had been driven from the house. But soon another, wisely cloaking the bad intelligence, asked, "Joseph, where's your father? You haven't seen him for a long time, have you?" The boy saw that something was going on in the village, and that everybody noticed him; but he kept his word to his mother, and told no one that his father would come that day.

It was snowing very fast when he came to the ice in the meadow. He slid up and down, watching the path by which his father was to come. After a time, however, he felt lonely, and went to find his grandfather. When he came to the little workshop, he stood still before the door; for he heard the voices of two other men within. They were saying that the maid at the parsonage had said that the priest was going to leave the village, and that Röttmann and the miller were the cause of it; and then the men began to abuse Adam, and to say he was indeed "a horse;" for he let himself be bridled and driven wherever others pleased. Soon the men came out; and the grandfather said, "What! you here, Joseph? Go home, and I will come soon." He did not take the boy by the hand, as usual, but went with the other men, toward the parsonage.

Joseph stood looking after them; and then, suddenly, as if some one had called him, he turned and ran out of the village, into the field, to meet his father. "*He* will be glad to see me, *he* will put me on his horse!" he said to himself; and away he ran through the field, into the forest, with light steps. Now and then he stopped to gather the snow from his face and clothes, and make it into balls to throw at some tree, which he always hit. In the woods, he went more slowly, and often looked around him. On a mountain-ash sat two bulfinches, twittering as though half asleep, and at times picking the red berries, more of which fell to the ground than they ate. "You are such simpletons! You lose more berries than you get!" Joseph said, and went on, thinking of the silly creatures. Below, in the valley, a bird was singing by the brook, so sweetly, so fervently, it seemed like a thrush. As Joseph came along, the creature, still singing, flew away; and, the farther the boy went, the farther the bird flew along the brook, calling, as it seemed, "Come after me, come after me! Come here! Here I am! Here it is beautiful, beautiful!" But, the faster the child hurried after him, the faster he flew. There, where there is a sharp bend in the path, the snow lay very deep. Joseph sank to his knees at the first step; but he was wise enough to climb a rock,

and come down upon the path again, the other side of the snow-bank.

"It is well," Joseph thought, "that there are these mountain-ash-trees here, where the path goes down: I could find my way by them. Are these my father's trees?" he asked aloud. But the trees could not answer him, and there was nobody near to hear him. A fox was standing not far off in the thicket, and gazing at him. The animal seemed to wonder what this apparition meant. He remained immovable till Joseph cried, "Go!" and then he trotted away, but not very fast; and the boy said, again aloud, "Yes, grandfather, you are right. Now, I have seen for myself. The fox drags his tail on the ground, and wipes out his footprints, so that nobody can tell where he has gone. He knows a good deal!"

Magpies were chattering on the tree-tops, and a cross-bill was on a rock in the valley. The boy nodded to the bird several times, and the bird nodded back, but did not utter a sound, although it opened and shut its mouth constantly, as if to say, "I am hungry." "You shall have this," cried the boy, throwing the only piece of bread he had down into the valley; but the bird thought it was a stone, and flew away: and the bit of bread was buried in the snow, and nobody had it.

The boy went on, stopping occasionally under a

tree or an overhanging rock, to watch with delight the snow, that above whirled so confusedly in the air, and then fell so softly and regularly to the ground, covering every thing more deeply. "To-morrow, father must draw me on a sled," he said; and, at the thought of his father, he went on faster and faster. It was growing dark, and he began to feel a little afraid; but he kept on. It was well that Schilder-David had guarded him against the superstitions current in the country; although Häspele had told him that the souls of the dead danced at night in graveyards, looking like lights; and that a rider on a white horse often went through the forest, in the air, cracking his whip, and carrying a fir-tree as tall as a church-steeple, for a switch: and the boy thought of this, as night came on. There was a stone cross erected on the path, in the place where a boy, with a horse and wagon, had once fallen from the mountain, and on the cross sat a raven. "You are nothing but a raven," Joseph said, and threw a snowball at the bird. Farther on, he came to a shrine, in which he saw the figures of men dressed in summer clothes. He broke off the branch of a fir-tree, and wiped the snow from the figures that were gazing at him so fixedly. There were five of them, standing under green trees, and wearing white shirts, with green suspenders, and short, yellow trousers. They stood in a circle, each bear-

ing an axe in his hand, while in the foreground was one who stood by a man that was lying near a fallen tree, bleeding and writhing. The boy read the inscription, "Vincent Röttmann was struck by a tree, on Aug. 17; he sustained great injury, and died on Aug. 20. God grant him eternal peace, and punish all the guilty!" Joseph shuddered: the men were looking at him, as if he too were guilty.

As a sign that he was innocent, he laid the green branch on the shrine, and passed on, not without a feeling of fear, however, as he looked back, and saw the men still watching him.

What was this coming toward him? Was it a man? It had a hundred humps: no, it must be a spirit! It came nearer and nearer. Joseph did not turn from his path, however, but came boldly up to it, and said, "Good-evening!" The man with the hundred humps — it was the hatter, with the newly-ironed hats, which he had hung about him — tried, with both persuasion and force, to take the boy with him; but the latter escaped, and cried aloud, as he ran into the woods, "Father, father!" He comforted himself by saying, "He will soon come, he will hear me;" and, as the night came on, he still called, "Father, father!" until his cheeks glowed so that the snow melted, as it touched them.

He said his evening prayer three times, and

also, "Dear God, keep my father safe!" The last he repeated with peculiar fervor; and then he hurried on once more. He thought he heard a chattering and sighing far below him in the valley; but, when he listened, it became silent again. Where was the path now? There was no longer one to be seen. Crying, the child ran from one tree to another, "Father! mother! father! dear God! help me!" So he called, and God heard him. Three angels in white dresses, with golden crowns on their heads, came with lights, and sang very sweetly, —

"Awake, awake!
And come to me.
This midnight hour
Is calling thee!"

They came nearer; and now they were close to Joseph, who went directly to them, and said, "Dear angels, take me with you, and carry me to my father and mother!"

"Oh! a ghost! the Christ-child!" the three angels cried, and ran away with their torches very quickly; for they had wings, and could go as fast as they pleased.

Joseph would follow them, but he stumbled and fell; and, when he was on his feet again, they had disappeared, and he found himself once more alone. In an instant, he saw a light flash in the distance; and he started in the direction of it. He had lost

his cap, but he did not notice it: he ran with all his might, and cried, "Stop, stop! I am only Joseph!" But the angels would not stop, and were to be seen no more. Their footprints, however, were on the snow; and the boy followed them, till, at last, on a little elevation — thank heaven! — there was a light, many lights. There it was bright as day. The pleasant knowledge that somebody lived there came to the child, and gave him new strength, so that he ran with redoubled energy toward the light, and came directly to the forest-mill. The three angels were going up the steps, singing, —

"Three kings, with voices sweet and clear,
Are singing this song to each listening ear, —
'Awake, awake!
And come to me:
This midnight hour
Is calling thee!'"

Joseph went up behind them, hardly daring to breathe, much less to speak; for he thought, if he made any sound, the angels would fly immediately away. He went with them into a room where they finished their song, while the people within listened to it, and, after it was ended, gave them something to eat and drink, and also Christmas-gifts; and the angels ate and drank and expressed their thanks. And now it became clear to the child that these were no angels, but boys dressed

as such, who were playing the parts of the three kings; and, when they went away, he remained behind, and the inmates of the house then first became aware of his presence.

"Who are you? Where did you come from? What do you want?" The three women asked him.

"Eat something to warm you, you are so wet, and without any cap!" said the daughter. "Yes: eat and drink, and then you can tell us. Come: I will take your jacket off and hang it by the stove. Don't sit so near the fire: it isn't good for you."

"He is a beautiful boy!" said the miller's wife, while Joseph drank a little of the mulled wine.

"The angels led me to a good place. Do they have such drink in heaven?" said Joseph.

A peculiar light came into the eyes of Röttmann's wife, as she heard these words and this voice. She pushed aside the bottle that stood in front of her; and, bending over the table, she looked at the child, as a fox looks out of the forest.

"Where do you live?" asked Toni.

"In Waldhausen."

"And who is your father?"

"He isn't there."

"What is your mother's name?"

"Martina; and my grandfather's is Schilder-David."

"So: I have you at last!" cried the wild woman. "This is Adam's son!" She sprang quickly up, and seized the child as with a vulture's claw.

"Yes: my father's name is Adam. Do you know him?"

"Come with me, I want to put you to bed!" she cried.

"I won't go with you," said Joseph. "You are going to cook me, like the witches. Let me alone, or I'll bite you!"

"I will bite *you!* I will cook *you!*" screamed the woman, laughing. "Oh! This is a kindness from Heaven that has brought the boy into our hands. We will keep him, and will not give him up; and then we can force Adam and all to dance to our pipe."

But now Toni stepped between them, and said, "I will not give the child up to you." Then, turning to him, she said, "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid at all! Come and sit in my lap — so! I will take off your shoes, and put mine on you; then you will be warmer. Now tell me: did your mother know that you were going away? And why did you go alone, this dark night?"

"I wanted to find my father. They call him names in the village, because he is as strong as a horse; and my grandmother, they say, is a dragon: and I wanted to tell them."

"Stop! I will be a dragon to you!" cried

Röttmann's wife, wrestling with Toni for the boy. He resisted with all his might; and, just as the two women were struggling thus, both grandfathers stepped in.

"Here is my grandfather!" shouted the child, running to Schilder-David.

"Is this our lost grandson?" asked Speidel-Röttmann. "Come here, my boy. Here is another grandfather. He is a fine child! It would have been a shame!"

"And I say, 'No,' and three times, 'no,' and seven times, 'no!' and my tongue shall be pulled from my mouth and thrown to the dogs, before I will say, 'Yes!'" screamed his wife.

"You are right. Say, 'No!' but it is of no use. Is it not a miracle that a child has been lost, and found in such a way? Without, the whole village is running hither and thither in the woods to find the boy; and he is one we ought to be proud of; for it is an honor to have a child given us whom all men love so much, and put their lives in danger to save. Our Lord has wrought a miracle; and now, would that he might work another in you, wife! Be good, and yield. It is no sin to yield. Are you contented, Toni?"

"If my consent is enough, his father shall never be taken away from him."

"And I say, 'No,' and 'no!' And with my latest breath I will say, 'No!' and I will see if

any one can cry down my 'No!'" Schilder-David, during this conversation, had remained silent. He had held Joseph in his arms, stroking the boy's head and face, as if to be sure he had the child once more; and now he stole out of the house. He wanted to take Joseph home alone, but, when he had gone down the steps, he found that his knees would no longer support him, and he was obliged to sit down: here he could hear the clamor within, and suddenly a window, he knew, was opened, and a thick smoke came out as if the lights on the Christmas-tree were blown out.

As he sat thus, somebody came from the forest. It was Häspele. He shouted when he saw Joseph, who was shivering so that his grandfather could hardly hold him.

"Go back quickly, and say that he is found, that the men may not look for him longer," said David, his teeth chattering.

Häspele hastened back, crying aloud, "He is found, he is found!" until he could no longer utter a word.

A woman's figure now came to David, and said, "Give me the child!"

"No: I will not give him to you! What do you want with him?"

"I will carry him to my room, and put him to bed. Come with him."

"Ah! you are Toni? Your mother was a good woman."

"And I hope I shall be also. Come! Quick!"

"I cannot come up these steps. I feel now what I have gone through to-day."

"Then come to the stable: it is warm there."

She led him to it, made a good couch of dry hay, and laid the child on it. David sat with his hand on Joseph's forehead, hardly daring to breathe, long after the latter had gone to sleep. As soon as Toni saw they were both quiet, she left them in the stable.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SLEEPERS AND WATCHERS AT THE FOREST-MILL.

HÄSPELE had been sent forward by the parents, when they saw the lights from the little elevation. He was to ascertain what was going on there. Martina would not believe it possible, when Adam said, "It may be — who knows — perhaps we shall find our Joseph at the forest-mill;" and yet, now she would hasten down: but Adam persuaded her to remain till Häspele should return. At last the shoemaker came. He ran to the spot where they were to wait for him; but they were not there. "Is every thing bewitched to-day?" said he.

But Adam and Martina were not far away.

They had been on the spot when the three angels had passed, to whom Adam had called with his powerful voice; but the angels seemed to have such a terror of the whole Röttmann race, that they ran fast.

"You will find that our Joseph went to hear the singing of the three kings," Martina said, as her hope revived.

Adam ran after the angels, and caught one by the wing; but that alone remained in his grasp. He followed them, however; and they were no match, in running, for such a man as Adam Röttmann. He seized one, and, holding him high in his arms, asked about Joseph; then he brought him to Martina, who was waiting. But the boy was so terrified, that nothing could be found out by him. He could tell nothing, not even who his comrades were; and when they asked him if a large boy, about seven years old, had met him, he said first, "No," and then, "Yes." He could give no information whatever; and, in the midst of the questioning, Häspele appeared, crying, "He is there! He is there!"

"Who is there?"

"Joseph!" Häspele exclaimed.

"Where, where, where?" and Martina sprang toward him. "Where is he? For Heaven's sake, tell me! Is he living or dead?"

"Yonder, in the forest-mill, he sits, drinking warm wine."

"My Joseph, my Joseph!" Martina cried, so that the name was echoed in the valley.

She ran with all her might down the mountain, and Adam could hardly keep up with her. She hastened up the steps of the forest-mill, and threw open the doors, calling, "Joseph, Joseph! Where is my Joseph?"

"To the devil with your Joseph!" answered a voice which she knew. No fright, no anguish, no fear of death, or joy of heaven, had prostrated Martina; but this voice did what nothing else could do. With a frightful shriek, she fell lifeless to the floor. Adam, who was just behind her, was so terrified himself, that he let her fall, without supporting her. "Mother, mother!" was all he could utter.

"Do not call her 'mother'!" Toni cried. "Go away, Adam! Let me help Martina! I will take care of her! Give me some warm wine! Shake the snow from your cloak, on her temples — so! She breathes now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Adam's mother. "If the whole world has turned fool, I have not. And if all of you surround me, like May-bugs, I will still say 'No!'"

Speidel-Röttmann, instead of answering his wife, went to Martina.

"Come, Martina, try to sit up. I will help you. Here, sit here!"

"My Joseph! Where is my boy?"

"He is asleep in the warm stable. I left him sleeping; but his grandfather was with him, and awake. We laid him in some nice hay — but, wait a moment! We will bring him up now, and put him on my bed: it is just here, in the next room. You go, Adam! You need not be afraid that any thing will happen to Martina. Go! I am with her."

"And I," said Speidel-Röttmann.

Adam went down the steps to the stable, and brought the child back. Schilder-David was sleeping so soundly, that Adam did not like to wake him. The child slept on in Adam's arms. He once carried his hand to his father's face, and then let it fall again, lifeless. They led Martina gently to the chamber, and she bent over Joseph, to hear him breathe.

"Lie down a while on the bed," said Toni to her.

She looked strangely at the miller's daughter, till the latter said, "Be glad that every thing has happened as it has. Adam and I have been betrothed, it is true; but we were driven to it, both of us. He is good, and has not spoken a word to me, but of you; and we have been betrothed, and have not kissed each other."

"Then I will kiss you," said Martina, throwing her arms about Toni's neck.

"I would like to have my cheek there," said

Häspele to Adam, and stepped toward the two women. "Now, Toni," he said, "it would be well if you would have me; will you? I see already, in your eyes, that you will say 'No;' but, nevertheless, I am making your wedding shoes."

"Where is my father?" Martina exclaimed.

"Asleep in the hay."

"Great Heavens! If he should wake and find the child gone, he would go crazy!"

"Be quiet. I will go to the stable, and stay with him till he wakes," answered Toni; but Häspele kept her back: he wanted something to drink before he went back to the Reitersberg, where the watch was kept. Toni quickly brought him a glass of wine. The betrothal wine was drunk to-day by strange guests.

Once again stillness reigned at the mill. Here Joseph was sleeping, and at his bed-side Adam and Martina were watching; there in the hay slept Schilder-David, with Toni sitting by him; and above, in his chamber, the miller was asleep. Röttmann's wife tried to rouse him: she needed the help of some man. But the miller gave no answer to her calls; and she could only curse the motionless "meal-bag" that lay so still while his house was turned upside down. When she came back to the room down stairs, she cried aloud, "What is this? Is the world coming to an end to-day?" For she heard the report of guns upon the moun-

tain, in the valley, on the rocks. It waked little Joseph, who called "Father!"

"I am here," Adam answered.

The firing was continued, accompanied by the blowing of a horn, the ringing of bells, the cracking of whips, and the barking of dogs.

"You have called the devil, and he is coming. Do you hear? He is coming. Yield, while there is yet time," pleaded Speidel-Röttmann.

"Let the devil come. I am willing. I would like to speak a word with him," answered his wife. "You are all good for nothing. You cringe and submit. A firm woman never gives up,—never! She would rather die."

The wild army came nearer and nearer, and at length stopped before the mill. They did not come in, however; for they heard in the stable a woman's cry of distress, and the wild lamentation and groaning of a man. David had waked, and had not found the child; and now he was searching in the hay, and calling and groaning. The assurances of Toni did not calm him; for he threatened to strangle her unless she gave him the boy. Edward hastened to the stable; and Toni sprang towards him, crying, "Help, help!" In the light of the lantern, David looked frightfully wild, throwing the hay about, with straws hanging from his hair, about his face.

"David, all is well," said the young farmer, with

his well-toned voice. The old man sank back in the hay.

"Who is the stranger?" Toni asked of Häspele.

"The priest's brother-in-law."

"Sir — sir," — Toni began. "Tell David that his little grandson is in my room, and that Adam and Martina are with him. Do you tell him; for he will not believe me, he will not listen to me. For Heaven's sake, help me! for you are the brother of our priest's good wife, and must be a good man. I saw that this morning. Stay and help us."

Schilder-David, who, at these words, had sat up in the hay, now reached his hand to Toni. "You are right," he said. "Forgive me, and help me to rise." She on one side, and Edward on the other, helped him; and he said, "You are both very good." Edward supported the old man with his left arm, and extended his right hand to Toni: he did not know why he did it. And she gave him her hand; she did not know why she did it: but they held each other's hand fast.

"I can go alone, now," David said; and they brushed the straw from his clothes, and accompanied him to the steps.

The meeting between Martina and her father was interrupted by a loud laugh in the next room, whither they all hastened. It was Häspele, who was playing the clown in order to gain the consent of Röttmann's wife, which he thought might be most easily won in this way.

When Joseph, holding his grandfather's hand, came into the room, Toni said, "You mustn't hear any thing of this;" and she led him back to the chamber. "This is the priest's brother-in-law," she said to Röttmann's wife, introducing Edward as she went out.

He spoke earnestly to the woman; but she gave him no answer, would utter no sound: she simply glared at him under her thick eyebrows.

"It is almost time to go to church," somebody cried; and, forthwith, the whole band of men left the room. When they had assembled in front of the house, a voice cried in the room, "Long live Speidel-Röttmann's wife! she has given her consent." It was Häspele who had said it; and he now came exultingly down the steps. Every one cheered again and again, the horn was blown, the bells rung; and nobody heard a voice that called from the window.

With singing and horn-blowing, the party went through the forest towards the village. Toni was with Martina; but, at the place where the road begins, she stopped, and said, "I must go back. I would like to go to church with you, and stay with you; but — I do not know what it is — a certain terror has seized me, as I think that my father has not been waked by all the noise. I am not a good daughter to have neglected him. Good-night, Joseph," said she, giving him her hand. "Good-night, all."

As she passed Edward, he said, "Good-night," softly, and she answered as softly, "Good-night," but they did not take each other's hand again.

Häspele uttered a loud cheer for her as she went back, and all the others joined with him. Adam carried Joseph in his arms: he had put the new clothes and boots on the boy. Finally he yielded to the grandfather, and let the child walk with David.

Just before they reached the village, Häspele cried, with the little strength that remained to him, —

"Halt, halt!"

The wolf was lying here in the field, where Adam had thrown it. He carried his son to the dead beast, and said, "See, I killed him with my stick!" But no entreaty nor chiding could induce Joseph to touch the wolf: he was afraid of it. "It is well that you have come into your father's hands," said Adam. "If this had lasted longer, you would never have become a Röttmann!" Leading the boy by his right hand, and dragging the wolf by the left, he came, with the others, to Schilder-David's house.

CHAPTER XVII.

MUCH IN A SMALL HOUSE.

ONE thing I forgot to tell you: the miller" — Lois was saying, when she was suddenly interrupted by a shout in front of the house.

"He is found! Joseph is here!"

The women ran out, and asked, "Are all safe?"

"All safe, — all!" was the reply.

Lois remained immovable in her chair. She only pressed her feet more firmly on the cricket, which began to tremble strangely: then she took a pinch of snuff to quiet herself, and regarded the jacket with that significant look that says, "I shall not take you in my hands again."

"Joseph is there!" cried Häspele, who was the first to come in.

"And my jacket is done," answered Lois, in the modest assurance that she had kept Joseph alive by her unceasing sewing. As the foolish Häspele

took no notice of this, however, she asked, "Where was he found?"

"In the forest-mill."

"I need not have asked," protested Lois, looking about her with a proud complacency. "I knew where he was; I described the way he went. At the very moment that the cry came, I had this word on my lips, 'miller.' The women will all testify to this."

To Lois, nothing seemed so important as the fact that she had been so wise, and had seen what was taking place where she was not present. As soon as the others came into the room, even while Martina was pressing her hands, unconsciously crushing thus a pinch of snuff, she repeated, "I knew it; I said he was in the forest-mill. Just as Häspele came in, I was pronouncing the name of the miller. And now I prophesy to you, Martina, that you will have your Adam."

"It is so, it is so! He is coming!" cried Martina.

Lois cast her eyes humbly upon the floor. She did not wish it to appear that she could prophesy, only when she saw. She nodded to all who came in, as if to say, "I knew that you would all come. I saw every thing beforehand, and was sure that Adam held Joseph in his arms. I saw the wolf, too, although I thought it was a snake; but one poisonous animal is as bad as another. It has

all come to pass as I expected." She was not surprised at any thing. "Nothing is hidden from me," her manner plainly said; and she took her snuff as quietly and comfortably as usual.

"I have three fathers," little Joseph said. "Lois, here are my three fathers!"

"You must go to sleep," David said. "Martina, carry Joseph to bed!" "Thank God, we are at home once more!" he screamed into the ear of his wife. She nodded pleasantly, and took some straws from her husband's hair. "Have you been cutting hay?" she asked. All the others laughed, and she laughed with them. Looking about, she could see in their faces what she could not hear. She extended her hand to Speidel-Röttmann, and said, "Sit down, sit down!"

Adam took her hand, and cried aloud in her ear, "Bid me welcome, mother!"

The deaf woman started back as if she had received a blow. "I can hear. I am not as deaf as that," she said, sinking upon a chair, and looking timidly at the large men and their great dogs.

David's little house was not built for a Röttmann. Father and son, both nearly touched the ceiling when they stood upright. Little Joseph sat a while on Speidel-Röttmann's knee. David was jealous, and almost cross with the boy for becoming so easily acquainted with another.

"Give me your great wolf-dog?" asked Joseph of Röttmann, who answered, —

"It is yours."

"You are mine," said Joseph to the dog. But it was necessary to leave the animal with Speidel-Röttmann, for he would not go with Joseph.

"Somebody take Joseph to bed," David commanded again. The grandmother saw by the lips of her husband what he said, and she took the boy and went with him to the little attic-room. The door had hardly closed upon them when Lois astonished everybody, by stepping forward, and saying with peculiar emphasis, "And now, Martina, dress yourself for your wedding! Do you men — if you are men — have Martina and Adam married this very night! You can, if you will, and do not look back! You can do a Röttmann deed to-night, and distinguish yourselves. The wedge can split a hard block, and the horse can draw a heavy load. Why do you look at me so? Go to the priest's, and I tell you you can do it. I tell you so, and I know what I say. Come, Martina! I will dress you. I have promised you I would. You shall veil your face no more! You have walked in sorrow and shame long enough! Come!"

She drew Martina into the next room, while all watched her in amazement; but no one spoke. Soon Martina came back in her holiday dress. Adam went to her, and showed her something which no one else could see, fastened with a peculiar band to his purse. Then he turned and said,

"Father, and father-in-law, it is best so. Come with us to the priest. He must marry us to-day."

"It cannot be."

"We will try."

"There is a main point," Schilder-David answered. "If a man has his bans called, he must know the catechism, — at least, the ten commandments. Can you say them, Adam? You are silent. Here is Joseph's catechism. Go into the next room, and learn them quickly."

"I will help you," said Martina, going with him.

But this proved a hard task. Large drops stood on Adam's brow; but, in spite of his efforts, he could not remember the ten commandments, particularly the order in which they came. He failed again and again; but, at the same time, it was evident that he was much moved, as he tried in this hour to impress these eternal laws upon his heart.

"Does Joseph know them?" he asked Martina.

"Yes: word for word."

Lois now came to Adam's assistance. She entered the room, saying, "Don't stop for this now. It is different with you from what it is with most men. The priest will not ask for them; and you can promise him that you will learn them."

"Let it be so," Adam said gladly, and closed the book. A heavier load was lifted from his shoulders then than had been at the time he carried the two wheels.

He went back to the little parlor with Martina, and the two fathers prepared to leave the house with them. Adam attempted to explain to his mother-in-law what was to take place; but she drew back from him, and held her hands over her ears. When David spoke to her, she nodded, and said, "Must I stay at home to take care of Joseph? I will do it, because you have all done more than I have to-day. I have staid here; but I would like to see my Martina married."

"Lois will be good enough to stay with you."

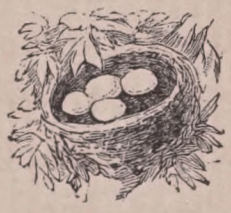
"No: I am not good enough. I have promised to be at Martina's wedding; and I cannot stay if I would."

Fortunately, the helper-in-need, Häspele, came in at this moment; and although he had arrayed himself in fine style, and took great pride in this, and although he rejoiced beyond measure that the wedding was to take place, and naturally wished to stand among the first there, he was at last persuaded to remain with Joseph; for Martina said, "Cousin, you have been kind to the child and to me all your life: do this one kindness more, and stay with him now."

"Yes, yes: I will do it. Say no more," he said, overcoming his disappointment; and he went up to the attic-room, and sat by Joseph's bedside. The two fathers, the mother, the bride, and the bridegroom, went to the parsonage. A few steps

behind, Lois went alone. She looked around at all the houses, where lights were shining, although nobody suspected what this night would bring forth. Lois heard music, wedding-music, in the air. No one else heard it; but she knew it, and always heard more than other persons.

When the wedding-party arrived at the priest's house, Lois remained in the kitchen with the maid. She soon sent the girl, however, to the parlor, to open the window which overlooked the kitchen.



CHAPTER XVIII.

FOR THE CHILD'S SAKE.

THE darkness grew into light; the light was changed to darkness; to-day had become yesterday. The priest needed all his quiet self-composure to keep himself from a feverish anxiety and restlessness. But as he never permitted the alarm-bell in the village to be rung, save in the greatest need, so he guarded his inmost being from tumult. He looked out of the window a long while, and listened to the ticking of the clock on the church-steeple, to which his own heart beat in time. He had learned the difficult art of keeping himself calm in the midst of all the suffering and distress which his heart could experience; and of subduing every emotion, even that noblest one of sympathy.

While all who had remained in the village set themselves to work, or sought the society of others,

in order to forget their anxiety, or to keep themselves awake, he sat alone in his room, motionless and thoughtful; and yet in his soul he was greatly moved. The villagers, who knew of this custom of their priest, asserted that he composed a sermon at such times: but his wife had told her father, and no one else in the world, that, in these moments, the priest had the most wonderful thoughts, so pure and spiritual, that words were too harsh for them; and he was satisfied to gain them for himself, and had neither wish nor need to write them. It had been thus, when, in the neighboring village of Wengern, they were seeking the child who was frozen to death; and the words which are now on the child's grave-stone he had spoken, as if in a dream; and she had had great trouble to persuade him to let her write them, and send them to his colleague in Wengern. Sometimes, in these quiet moments, he would softly hum one of the melodies of his favorite master, or would repeat a poem, a deep thought of another soul, adding thoughts of his own to it. When he had thus communed with himself, — his wife called this his "highest," he called it his "deepest" existence, — he would go out into the world of men, transfigured and sanctified as it seemed, and speak with such earnestness, with such a fulness of power and depth of feeling, that every one was touched.

Thus he sat this evening, quiet, living in him-

self. The clock on the church-tower, that ushers in day or night, joy or sorrow, with the same voice, slowly struck one hour after another, announcing again and again that one more period of time had passed, and had become a part of eternity.

"We have found him!" was suddenly called in the street; and a horn was blown. The priest stepped to the window, and welcomed back his brother-in-law.

Once more in the house, Edward hastily related how Joseph had been found in the forest-mill, with Adam's betrothed. He did not dwell long upon the cruel nature of Adam's mother, but hastened to speak, with enthusiasm, of the whole village that had shown itself so generous to-day. "These men have nothing," he said, "but their lives, their sound bodies, with which to fight their way through the world; and yet, with a determination and readiness that never faltered, they risked their all to save a lost child. It has been proved, dear brother, that your heart lives in all these men: you were at home, and still you were with us. I am sure it must be hard, almost impossible, for you to leave them."

As the priest did not reply, his wife asked, "Has the miller's Toni given up Adam? Thank Heaven! She has a good, true heart, that will carry her well through life. Why did you not bring her with you to the village? You should

have brought her to us, Edward. She needs some protection against her father, her stepmother, and Röttmann's wicked wife."

Edward did not answer; but he breathed hard. The priest said, "Do not be troubled about Toni; she is strong enough; she is of a good stock: and we can save no one from the consequences of his deeds, whether good or bad. Who has strength to do any act has also strength to bear the effects of it; and he must bear them."

Edward looked more composed, but his cheeks were glowing; and, when his sister laid her hand on them, she said, "You have a fever. Go to bed quickly. Go, and I will bring you some tea."

Edward had no wish to follow this advice, although he felt that every thing was swimming before his eyes: he had experienced more that day than he could tell. Just then, there came a knock. "Come in," the woman cried; but, as those without did not do so, she opened the door herself, and in stepped Speidel-Röttmann, Schilder-David and his wife, and, behind them, Adam and Martina.

"Sir," Schilder-David began, "God has helped us wonderfully; now, will you help us more, that every thing may be settled?"

"What shall I do?"

"Speak!" David drew back, and motioned to Speidel-Röttmann.

"I wish to say," the latter began, stroking again and again his bald head with his large hand, as if both making a sign of reverence, and drawing off an invisible hat, "I have nothing against it. The priest may marry my Adam and Martina this very night."

"Oh, that is so good!" exclaimed the priest's wife, as Adam came forward, holding Martina by the hand, and said, "Yes, sir, we beg you to do so."

"We beg you," repeated Martina softly.

"Peace, peace!" said the priest. "Do you two young people come with me to another room."

He went first, and the two followed him.

"Sit down," he said; and, when they were both seated, he continued, "Adam, you think because you are the richest person in the neighborhood, because you can hold up your money-bags, and cry, 'What does it cost?' that every one must submit to your pleasure. Because you are proud of your strength, because you are called 'The Horse,' because you can kill a wolf, you think there is no command, no eternal law, which cannot be set aside."

The priest stopped abruptly; and Adam began, "Sir, no one in the world knows me, — my father does not, my mother does not, — only Martina knows me: you, sir, know me partly, but not entirely. It is true, as you say, that there has

been a wild nature in me that has been willing to sacrifice every thing to its will. It is true that I have not yet conquered this wild nature; but, sir, from this moment it is down; and you and my Martina — Lay any punishment upon me; I will bear it; I have deserved it. Cut off my fingers, so that I shall be helpless as a little child: I will not murmur."

His emotion prevented Adam from continuing.

The priest resumed, "It is a law that persons shall be called in church, three successive Sundays, before they are married."

"I have not then yearned for my child long enough? Tell me what I must do, sir, and I will do it."

"Oh, dear sir!" Martina entreated, "have we not been punished enough? Have we not suffered long enough?"

"No. You have conducted yourself well during these hard years; but your sin was great. It may not be that those who break one law shall set aside all others."

"If there is no other way, in God's name let it be so!" said Adam. Martina's tears would not let her speak. The priest suffered them to sit quietly a few moments, and then said, "Come back to the other room."

"Are you ready?" asked the priest's wife, as they came in.

Adam and Martina shook their heads. Then Speidel-Röttmann stepped forward, and asked, "Is it on account of the bans?"

"Yes, yes," Adam replied.

"If there is nothing more," said Speidel-Röttmann, "I will pay the fine, sir, no matter how great it is."

"Ah, yes! if you come forward with gold, you think you can arrange every thing as you please. But, Mr. Röttmann, there is something which your ten horses cannot move. One thing more, — has your wife given her consent?"

"Häspele said so," Edward rejoined. "He must come."

Adam hastened away, and soon brought Häspele, who came, trembling; and when the priest asked him, upon his honor, if Adam's mother had given her consent, he said, biting his lips till they bled, "No, she has not."

"Well, then," said the priest, "I will take it upon my conscience to marry Adam and Martina, without her consent. But I have still something to say to you: neither your strength, Adam, nor your humility, — I believe it is honest, and I hope it will last, — nor your boast to pay the fine, Mr. Röttmann; but" —

"For little Joseph's sake," his wife could not help exclaiming, — "for little Joseph's sake, you will do it. He is a good child. How would it be if he

should hear the name of his parents called in church! How much would he have to endure with his school-fellows! And who knows what bitterness might rankle in his heart, and what fruit it might bring forth some day!"

"It is true," said the priest. "The child is now sleeping, and knows nothing of all the trouble and sin that are in the world. He ran into the face of death to find a father who was so weak, in spite of his strength, and a grandfather, who, until now, has thought that every thing could be bought with gold. For little Joseph's sake, I will marry you this very night."

Martina threw herself on her knees before the priest, and kissed his hand. Adam seemed on the point of doing the same; but he hesitated. He had never been accustomed to kneel; so he laid his hand on Martina's head, as if to show that she had knelt for him as well as herself.

There was no sound in the room till the priest spoke again. "I will see you at the church," he said, and went to his own room. Soon the parsonage was quiet as usual; but, before the wedding-party had gone, it was told from house to house that Adam and Martina would be married that night. Lois had said so.

CHAPTER XIX.

A VOICE AT MIDNIGHT.

IN the night the bells were ringing. Through the open church-door a bright light shone out upon the snow-covered graves. In the church, the whole parish had assembled, each person having a torch or candle. The organ was sounding, and all were singing.

The music ended, the priest stood up in the pulpit, and said, "What you do to one of the least of his children, you do to our Father who is in heaven. These words, spoken in a far-distant country, have been proved to-day, here, in our woods; here, where scarcely ever before has the foot of man followed the tracks of the wild beasts;

here as everywhere." Then he told his people that a man could do nothing better for himself than to do something for another. "And never," he exclaimed, "never is the human face more beautiful than at the moment when one is doing a good deed. A glory sheds itself around it, and frees it from its hard look of pain and anxiety." He next described to them a service at midnight, and continued, "Of your own accord, you have come together, and have roused yourselves from sleep: rouse your souls also from their sleep. How often does some care or distress wake you in the night, and you toss from side to side, and can find no rest! Well for you! if it is only sorrow or care that lurks about in the darkness, and will not be overcome. But, woe to you! if it is the remembrance of some wicked act that wakes you. Here a child wakes his mother: his father is away; she stands by the sick-bed, and longs for the day, and asks, 'Isn't it morning, yet?'"

At these words of the priest, Martina caught Adam's arm as he sat by her in the front seat, and said, "That is what our child asked last night." And the priest continued, "'Oh, if it were only day!' she murmurs: 'if the sun would only shine in the sky, and it were light everywhere!' But even now there are stars shining in the heavens." The preacher ended by saying, "How well it would be if all would once, of their own

free will, shake off sleep, and look at the starlight in the night." He repeated the words of the text again, and blessed all, who, to-day, had made a good deed the entrance-gate through which they had come to the church.

No sound, not even that of hard breathing or coughing, which usually interrupted the midnight-service as a protest of disturbed life, had been heard. Everybody had held his breath; and now the very walls shook as the singing began again.

In a few simple words, the priest performed the marriage-ceremony; and quietly, amid the continued ringing of the bells, the villagers separated. Some boys were ready with guns to salute the wedding-party as it returned home; but they were prevented by those coming from the church; for every heart was so moved it could bear no tumult: the deep thoughts the priest had awakened must not be disturbed. When, at one o'clock, the moon arose, and drove the snow-storm before it, it looked down upon a peacefully-sleeping village, where all hearts were satisfied, and felt themselves blessed.

CHAPTER XX.

IT IS MORNING.

THERE was a glad waking the next morning. Every eye shone bright, and every one called to his neighbor, "Good-morning! it's very fine weather!" while really, the finest weather was in their souls. The sun seemed to shine with an unwonted brilliancy, and the snow-decked mountains and trees sparkled in the morning-light. But the best of all was something that was not as changeable as the weather, — a child had been saved; parents and grandparents were made happy; and a wedding-table had been spread, for which nothing had been baked, and on which no glasses had clinked. And how well and truthfully the priest had spoken! but it

was a pity, a great pity, that he must go away: they would keep him there always.

In the attic-chamber of David's house, Adam and Martina were standing by Joseph, who was still fast asleep, although a bright sunbeam, so bright that it was melting the ice on the little window, was shining on his breast. His face wore a look of defiance; his head was bent backward; his lips were pouted, and slightly open; and his little clinched hand lay near his glowing cheeks.

"I'll wake him: it's time," said Martina.

"Do me the favor to let him sleep. It's so with me when I have done any hard work; I can sleep three days at a time. How pretty a child looks asleep! I never saw one before," Adam said; and Martina looked in surprise at him.

The little room was not high enough for Adam. He sat down upon Martina's trunk, and asked her, in a tone so low that it seemed as though it must have come from another person, to step out of the light that he could see the boy.

"I will remain here till he wakes," he continued. And Martina repeated again and again what little Joseph had said the night before, — "Isn't it morning, yet?" At these words, the child turned in bed, and moved as though he were waking; but still he slept on. At length his mother bent over him, and laughingly called, "Mother, isn't it morning, yet? It is morning, Joseph. Wake up: your father is here."

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With a look of surprise and delight, the boy sat up in bed; but he began to cry aloud, when his father's gigantic form rose in the little room. The man seemed to the child like some monstrous phantom, as a thick cloud passed over the face of the sun, and made it dark in the chamber. Martina had much trouble in pacifying the boy. His father must go out of the room while she dressed him: and, as Adam passed out and heard Martina comforting Joseph within, the consciousness of his great sin came heavily upon him for a moment; then it was gone, and he was Adam Röttmann, who could rule every one. He felt angry with the child, who did not love him, did not spring into his arms: he would compel the boy to love and honor him, — that very day too. When Joseph came out of the room, he ran quickly by his father down the stairs.

"He ought to be taught that that is no way to treat his father," said Adam angrily to Martina. But she explained to him that Joseph had loved him enough to go out to meet him, without fear, in the darkness and snow; but that the boy was naturally shy to strangers, and did not know his father yet. Adam ought to win his heart by patience and kindness, and not try to force the boy's love.

"You are right, quite right," said Adam; and went down stairs so heavily, that the whole house

shook. He found Joseph standing by Schilder-David; and he asked the boy, "What would you like to have me give you to-day? tell me."

The child did not answer, but looked up timidly at his father from beneath his contracted brows. He left his grandfather's side, but would not go to Adam. He looked wonderingly at the nail on the wall over the stove where some writing was hanging in a frame. Long before day, David had again placed there Martina's confirmation-certificate; and now a sunbeam fell upon these words: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." — REV. iii. 11.

"There is one thing I nearly forgot," said David. "The priest was right when he said there were laws that could not be broken; and I have made one that must be kept. Come here, Joseph: come to me!" The boy noticed that his grandfather spoke sternly; but he obeyed: and David said, "Have you your new clothes on? Well, I must give you something besides. You know you must have your punishment for running away: now I will give it to you."

He went to the looking-glass, and drew a switch from behind it, while Joseph began to cry. Adam and Martina both begged David to omit the punishment this time. But he said, "I must do it once more; Joseph disobeyed me, and I must punish him: after this, however, whatever he does will be

your affair, Adam. When you want to run away again, Joseph, you will think of this." Then he gave the boy the number of blows which he had assigned as a penalty, and afterwards handed the switch to Adam, saying, "There! you have it now. From this time, it is for you to keep him in check: I have done my part." "Now, if they make much of him in the village," he whispered to Martina, "he will think of this; and that will be good for him." But Joseph cried loud a long time, and would not let his mother comfort him.

In another house, there was also loud weeping on this bright morning, and that the first house of the village. In the parsonage, the maid sat in the kitchen crying bitterly. The beautiful fat goose which she was to roast to-day, which had been killed just in time to make a dinner for their honored guest, that fine creature that had been so well frozen before the window, had been stolen in the confusion of last night.

"Whoever tastes of what has been stolen from the priest will die! And how beautifully he spoke to them, and thanked them for what they did! and now they have done this to him! He ought to speak of it in his sermon to-day; and then whoever coughs first will be the one who stole it. I will go through the village, and search everywhere. I will have my goose again, whether it was a man or a fox, a wolf, a dog, a marten, a

raven, — whatever it was that stole it. I will find him out, and the wicked persons who are cooking it. We have nothing to eat for dinner." So the maid mourned in the kitchen till the priest finally came to her, and asked, "What is the matter?" She quickly told him, and showed him the empty hook by the window, on which she had hung the goose. "The hook is there; but the goose is gone," she sobbed: and then she took hold of it, as if to try if it were strong enough to hang the thief thereon. Brother Edward also came, and he must do the girl the favor to look at the empty hook. Turning to his brother-in-law, the priest said, "It is often so. The most savory morsel often falls to the ground, just as we are raising it to our lips."

"And yet you laugh," his wife exclaimed. "Yes: you men do not know how hard it is for any one in the country to prepare a good meal, or how we rejoice when every thing is ready. I thought we had one for to-day; for yesterday my mother sent me some chestnuts."

"I am not laughing: on the contrary, I am very sorry" —

"But you are most sorry that any one has been bad enough to steal. You care nothing for dainties," Edward said.

"Not at all. I am so material, that I am always ready to eat a good piece of crisp, roast goose.

And, in regard to the thief, if somebody else's goose had been stolen, the theft would have been the same; and yet I should have fretted less than I do now, when my goose is taken by the neck."

"We have its neck still," exclaimed the maid. The others laughed; and just then the post-boy was heard coming up the steps. He brought the newspaper, which the priest quickly took; and, glancing at the announcements that most interested him, he read that the place in Odenwald, for which he had applied, had been given to another, — a much younger priest, but one of the new-fashioned, stiff-necked sort.

"There is another empty hook," said the priest, handing the paper to his wife, and pointing to the announcement. With the newspaper, a letter had come from her uncle, the president of the consistory, which explained that the place had been conferred upon another, in order that our priest might go to the capital.

"I decline: I will stay here," the priest said shortly.

The maid, who was sent to the inn to buy some meat to take the place of the stolen goose, had two important pieces of news to communicate, which were not in harmony, and which she confused in the strangest manner. The goose had been stolen, and the priest would stay in the village.

The Christmas-bells were ringing in the bright

morning, with gentle vibrations. These peals were not misnamed when they were called "cradle-songs." When the priest went to the church, the villagers were standing in two rows, extending from the parsonage to the church; and, as he passed by them, they all greeted him, as a token of their gratitude and joy that he would remain with them.

While the organ was playing in church, a veiled figure crept up to the kitchen of the parsonage, and unexpectedly laid a fat goose on the window-seat. Was it the stolen goose, or another? Was it the thief who had returned it, or some kind heart that brought another in its place? It was never known. The maid declared that she had seen an eye twinkle; but she did not recognize the face, nor did she wish to recognize it. She was so full of joy, that she ran to the vestry of the church to tell the priest that he need not preach about the theft; but, when she came there, she did not dare to go in, so she went home again, saying, "He is wise, and will not preach about a goose." In which she was perfectly right.

Little Joseph had gone to church with his parents. He looked in wonder at all that was going on, but he said nothing: he only held fast to his father's hand. At the church-door, his parents let him go with his schoolmates, while they themselves separated, Adam sitting with the men, and

Martina with the women. They were together, however, for they had come to the same church, and their voices united in the same hymn. The singing was not as good as usual to-day; for the best singer was wanting, whose deep voice had often helped the schoolmaster. Häspele was so hoarse, that he could not speak a loud word.

When Joseph had joined his comrades, some of them asked him if he knew what his name was.

"Joseph Röttmann, — what it always was," he answered.

"No: 'Joseph in the Snow,' you are called now." And he keeps the name to this day.

At noon, the health of the priest was drunk again and again at the inn, and also the health of "Joseph in the Snow;" and every man had to relate his experience of the past night. It was far more wonderful that no one had been hurt than that Joseph had found his way to the forest-mill.

In his house, Schilder-David, in his Sunday clothes, sat before his large Bible; and, following the words with his fingers, he read on from the place where he had stopped the night before. He was living his accustomed life, and reading the book through again; but now the words seemed wonderfully full of meaning to him.

In the afternoon, a messenger came to the village and said there was some one dead at the forest-mill.

"Röttmann's wife!" every one cried.

"No: the miller. He died last evening; but no one knew it till early this morning: he killed himself drinking with Speidel-Röttmann. It's frightful to think how Röttmann's wife cursed him last night when he did not answer her. She cursed a dead man!"

Every one shuddered: and truly the miller's death was much regretted. Now, far less was said of Joseph's escape, than of the miller's decease.

Nobody was more terrified at this report than Lois. It was now proved that she could do more than other persons: she could wish a person dead; she had wished the miller to be poisoned by the spices and wine that were bought in the village. A tremor of delight, and, at the same time, of fear, passed through her whole frame as she thought of her wonderful power.

She did not dare to go out of the house. She thought the entire village would know what she had done. "I did not mean it," she said to herself; "but I must be more careful what I do in future. I will wish nothing but good to the whole world, even to Speidel-Röttmann's wife." Finally she ventured to go to Martina, and say to her secretly, "Pray, take care that the women don't tell what I wished the miller yesterday. People are so superstitious! They would at last believe that

I can do more than others. But, if I can, I must not have the name of doing it." She was only half satisfied when Martina assured her that nobody thought of such a thing, and that the world was not so stupid as to believe it. She thought, "You are stupid yourself. But I am glad I alone know what there is in the world." She was frightened at every thought she ever had, or ever might have, about a person: it was terrible to have the power of doing what she pleased to any one.

When the women of the village came to see her, she repeatedly said, "I wish well to the whole world. Nobody wishes better than I. I wish nothing but good to everybody, everybody: I make no exceptions."

None understood her; but they all said, "Oh, yes! you were always good."

"Listen to what I say," she cried, with sparkling eyes. "I say only these words: The parsonage and the miller's Toni. Remember what I have said. I say nothing more."

Soon after the news of the miller's death came, the priest and his wife, under the guidance of Edward, went to the mill; and it was well they did so, for Toni was quite overcome by her sorrow. She had suffered very much since yesterday; and now she blamed herself, that, in her care for others, she had forgotten her father. She welcomed the

priest's wife as a ministering angel, and became calm only when the good woman promised to stay with her.

Edward offered to assist her in any way he could. She looked at him without speaking, and clung to the priest's wife.

The miller's wife, who had so soon become a widow, was crying and moaning in a most frightful manner. When the priest spoke to her, she hardly listened. She gazed at Toni as if she would poison the girl with her look, if possible. The victim was now free; and the tormentor must go as a beggar from the house.

People might contradict it as they would, Lois did know something; for, on new Year's Day, Toni went to the parsonage, and remained there during her year of mourning. By degrees, she regained her cheerfulness, and was as pretty as before, but rather more delicate.

In the summer the forest-mill was rebuilt. Edward came frequently on a visit to his sister, and never without going to the mill to see what was doing there, and to give some directions.

Lois often went to sew at the parsonage; and she had much to tell of the priest's wife and Toni, — how beautifully they lived together, and how the girl let her friend teach her in every thing. But Lois did not care to say much more; only at Adam

Röttmann's house, which was now painted green, did she open her heart to his young wife. Nowhere was she more at home than there; and she often said there was no pleasanter sight than that of the large, strong Adam walking about with his little daughter in his arms: she never could have believed that he would be so gentle and so mild. Martina thought smilingly of the time he learned to put his arm around her neck under the broad beech. Speidel-Röttmann's wife had long been dead. She would not confess it, although it had troubled her that she had cursed the dead miller so frightfully: before the world. she was as inflexible as ever. She sent for a lawyer, who was to draw up a paper for the consistory, declaring the marriage of Adam and Martina null and void. She did not live to see the trial, however: she died before the snow was entirely melted, through which little Joseph had gone to meet his father.

Now, when the priest stands in his pulpit, he sees before him, in the front seat, two good men who have become firm friends, — Adam Röttmann and Edward, who has married Toni.

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